

STRIKES TO HIT
60 UNIVERSITIES



>>Page 20

The devastating
decade of Tory rule

Services slashed and millions of people
driven into poverty >>Pages 10&11

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FIGHT TORIES & BILLIONAIRES

TAKE ON THE RICH



CAT ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

BACK CORBYN ● VOTE LABOUR

CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Students get
prepared for next
global strike

STUDENTS across the world are fighting to hammer home the urgency of ecological catastrophe.

Climate activists are preparing to walk out together in a global school students' day of action on Friday 29 November.

The strike comes as bushfires ravage Australia.

>>Page 6

REVOLT



Hong Kong
police aim to
crush movement

BATTLES IN Hong Kong reached fever pitch this week as cops trapped hundreds of students inside a university.

Cops stopped them from leaving, and attacked with tear gas. Tens of thousands of activists attempted to reach the university but police fought them back.

>>Page 8

HISTORY

Harriet Tubman—
freedom fighter

AS A new film telling her extraordinary life story is released, Yuri Prasad celebrates the life of Harriet Tubman, a former slave who helped others escape.

Tubman was an abolitionist, a suffragist, and a soldier. She remains an inspiration to all those fighting for a better world.

>>Pages 14&15



THE THINGS THEY SAY

'Look, this is either the Clash or the Rolling Stones'

Boris Johnson names his favourite band

'No wonder your country is in a state. It's because it's full of people like you.'

Alan Sugar to Venezuelan Jemelin Artigas, a contestant on The Apprentice. Artigas was the sixth non-white person to be evicted in the first seven weeks of the show

'I'm the collateral damage left behind. The Prime Minister puts his head in the sand and looks the other way'

Jennifer Arcuri, who has had an affair with Boris Johnson and went on foreign office trips and received state aid for her companies

'In a secret chamber of his chicken heart, Jeremy Corbyn always believes that the wicked West has got it coming'

Tony Parsons worries about Corbyn getting elected



British soldiers' torture and murder covered up

EVIDENCE IMPLICATING British soldiers in the murder of children and the torture of civilians was covered up by military commanders.

The documents that show this were then kept secret by the government.

Senior commanders had tried to hide war crimes by British troops in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Evidence had been found of murders by an SAS soldier and deaths in custody, beatings, torture and sexual abuse of prisoners by members of the Black Watch regiment.

One of the SAS's most senior commanders was referred to prosecutors for attempting to pervert the course of justice.

The evidence emerged during two war crimes inquiries—Operation Northmoor for Afghanistan and the Iraq Historic Allegations Team.

These were shut down in 2017 by the defence secretary at the time, Sir Michael Fallon.

One of Boris Johnson's election pledges is to amend the Human



BRITISH TROOPS stand accused

Rights Act to protect troops from legal action.

An IHAT detective told Panorama, "The Ministry of Defence had no intention of prosecuting any soldier of whatever rank he was unless it was absolutely necessary, and they couldn't wriggle their way out of it."

In the course of the two war crimes inquiries investigators amassed thousands of statements from British soldiers and witnesses, and vast amounts

of documentary evidence.

Evidence documents have now been leaked include:

- The murder of three children and one young man who were shot in the head at close range while drinking tea in their home in Afghanistan in October 2012 by an SAS soldier.

The soldier and his senior officers—including one of the regiment's most high-ranking figures—were referred to the military prosecutor to consider charges in relation to the shooting, but no action was taken

- The widespread abuse of prisoners in the summer of 2003 at Camp Stephen, in the Iraqi city of Basra, which led to at least two deaths in custody.

- The fatal shooting of an Iraqi police officer in August 2003. This was covered up by the commanding officer using a witness account of a soldier who years later said his evidence had been fabricated without his knowledge.

No case investigated by IHAT or Operation Northmoor led to a prosecution.

- THE NUMBER of children growing up in poverty in working households has increased by 800,000 since 2010.

The TUC said that child poverty in working families rose to 2.9 million cases last year, an increase of 38 percent since the start of the decade.

In 2010, one in five children in working households were growing up in poverty, but by 2018 this had increased to one in four.



- THE LIBERAL Democrat candidate for Putney claimed on her election leaflets that she had won the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize for banning landmines.

When questioned on it, Sue Wixley, who was part of a campaign to ban them in South Africa, suggested it was a "typo".

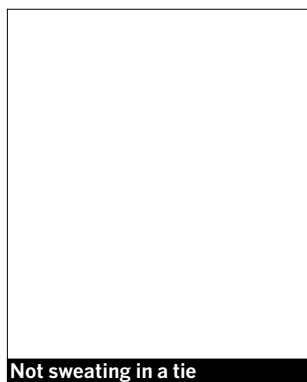
Rapist royal's worst car crash since Diana

HORSES SWEAT, men perspire, but royal rapists only lie. Prince Andrew was being "honourable" when he travelled across the Atlantic to spend four days staying with the abuser Jeffrey Epstein to end their friendship.

His excruciating self-justifying interview saw what little contrition there was addressed not to the victims but to his own circle for having "let the side down".

Virginia Giuffre was forced to have sex with the prince three times between 2001 and 2002, when she was a 17.

He had "no recollection of meeting this lady". But he remembers going to Pizza Express when he didn't rape her. He insinuated that a



Not sweating in a tie

photograph of himself with his arm round her waist was fake.

He claims a medical condition preventing him from sweating. Further that he never goes out not wearing a jacket and tie (pictured).

Kincora case gets closer to court

A FORMER resident at a notorious Belfast boys' home is taking a High Court action over claims he was trafficked for sexual abuse.

Richard Kerr says paedophiles subjected him to years of rape which was covered up by the British state.

He spent more than two years at the Kincora home (pictured). He is seeking damages against the Department of Health, the Northern Ireland Office, the police and the Home Office.

In court last week it was confirmed that defences in the case will be served in the next four weeks. Richard



has detailed a litany of alleged abuse during his time spent at institutions in the 1960s and 1970s.

His action is being supported by former British Army intelligence officer and whistleblower Colin Wallace.

Richard maintains that numerous investigations have failed to expose the full abuse at Kincora, along with the alleged knowledge and role of British agents.

HILLSBOROUGH

Duckenfield's 'responsible'

DAVID DUCKENFIELD had "personal responsibility" for "terrible mistakes" that led to the deaths of 96 people, a court has heard.

Duckenfield was South Yorkshire Police match commander on the day of the Hillsborough football disaster in April 1989.

Some 96 Liverpool fans died after a crush built up in two pens at the Leppings Lane end of the ground.

Duckenfield denies 95 counts of gross negligence manslaughter in relation to the deaths.

He can't be charged over the 96th death because the victim, Tony Bland, died over a year



David Duckenfield

and a day after his injuries were sustained.

Richard Matthews QC, prosecuting, summed up his case at Preston Crown Court last week.

He argued that it was not "unfair" to charge Duckenfield, and that his failures met the legal definition of "gross" negligence.

The jury heard of evidence Duckenfield gave to new inquests into the 96 deaths in 2015.

He had accepted that, after he ordered a gate to be opened to relieve crushing outside the ground, he failed to direct fans away from a tunnel leading to crowded pens.

When asked if this failure was the "direct cause of the deaths" Duckenfield replied, "Yes."

Benjamin Myers QC, defending Duckenfield, told the court that the prosecution was "shamefully, bitterly and deeply unfair".

He argued that Duckenfield was being made a "scapegoat" for others' failings.

Myers also said that "the most awful things have been said" about Duckenfield in the years since the disaster, and that he deserved a "fair trial".

The trial continues.

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Tories expose their racist rot in election campaign

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

BORIS JOHNSON has announced a huge rollback of migrants' rights in a bid to divert blame for the Tory-made crisis in the NHS and public services.

He said migrants will be forced to pay "on day one" to use the NHS, or be denied care.

Migrants from outside the European Union (EU) have been forced to pay a one-off health surcharge on top of their visa fees since 2015. The fee of £400 will increase to £625—and it will extend to all migrants, including those from EU countries.

EU migrants would also have to wait five years to access social security.

Health charges have seen some migrants die after they were denied care due to their immigration status.

Johnson's immigration plans were announced just days after figures showed that patients are faced with the worst waiting times on record.

He wants to stoke the myth that public services are overstretched because of migrants—when a decade of Tory austerity and privatisation is to blame (see pages 10&11).

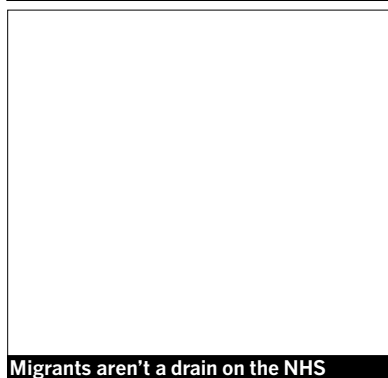
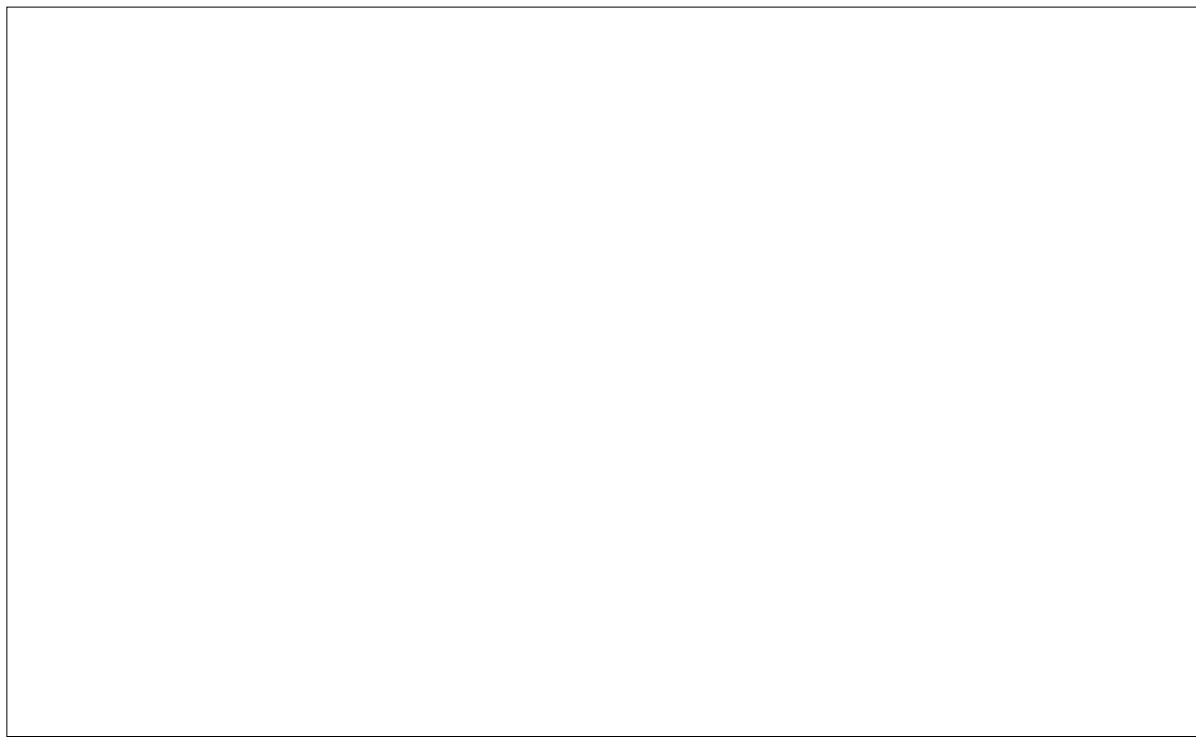
Contribute

The underlying myth that migrants don't contribute was blown apart by the government's own report into immigration policy after Brexit.

The Migration Advisory Committee reported that EU migrants "have paid £4.7 billion more in taxes than they received in welfare payments and public services".

The Tories have said they want to bring down "unskilled immigration" while attracting the "brightest and best".

Labour has continued to say it would bring in a "skills-based immigration" system. And Jeremy Corbyn



Migrants aren't a drain on the NHS

only said there would be "a lot of movement" after Brexit—despite the party's conference calling to extend freedom of movement (see page 4).

Big business has hit out against Johnson's plans, saying it needed "all skills levels".

PRITI PATEL wants to unleash the Tories' potential for racism

Carolyn Fairbairn, director of the CBI bosses' organisation, said, "If you do want to build 200,000 houses a year, you don't just need the architects and the designers.

"You need the carpenters, you need the electricians."

But arguments in favour of immigration should not be couched in terms of what's good for business.

Any form of division—between British-born and migrant workers or "good" and "bad migrants"—is a danger to working class people.

It weakens workers' ability to fight the Tories' assault on public services and the bosses who attack their pay and conditions.

On top of pushing racism against migrants, the Tories have continued trying to scapegoat Muslims as an

"enemy within". Home secretary Priti Patel said that Britain would not take in the children of British citizens who allegedly fought for Isis in Syria.

Her Home Office continues to preside over the threat of mass evictions of asylum seekers in Glasgow.

A court ruled last week that subcontractor Mears Housing could evict people without a court order.

The Tories were forced to suspend some of their members last week after evidence emerged of Islamophobic social media posts.

Anti-racists must stand with all migrants—and fight to defend and extend free movement.

Stand Up To Racism has called a day of action of Sat 30 November—Stop Johnson and his racist friends. For details go to bit.ly/30NovNoRacism

A year of Yellow Vest struggle

THE YELLOW Vest movement in France celebrated its first anniversary last Saturday by taking to the streets.

Around 40,000 people joined demonstrations across the country against president Emmanuel Macron.

As has become outrageously routine, they faced harsh repression.

Huge amounts of tear gas were used in Paris, Marseille, Nantes, Toulouse and Bordeaux. Police made hundreds of arrests, and banned many marches.

But Macron faces potentially powerful opposition as he seeks to ram through attacks on pensions.

Richard Greeman, a Marxist writer and activist best known for his work on Victor Serge, has written on the year of struggle.

Historic

"The first anniversary of the Yellow Vest uprising marks an historic moment," he wrote. "It is perhaps the first time in history that a self-organised, unstructured, leaderless, social movement has survived for so long."

"There was much eager discussion last weekend of an upcoming unlimited general strike called by the unions for 5 December.

"Yellow Vests have faced a year of lonely, increasingly dangerous resistance to the neoliberal counter-reforms of the arrogant, unpopular 'president of the rich'.

"Now suddenly new perspectives are opening for the Yellow Vests in their unequal struggle with the increasingly authoritarian, capitalist state."

Read Richard Greeman's full article at bit.ly/yellow1year

Socialist Worker Appeal to raise £125,000

Socialist Worker is the voice of people fighting for a better world. It dispels the racist scapegoating and anti-working class rhetoric of the mainstream press.

We publish stories of the strikes, protests and pickets that can beat back the bosses and bigots. We are asking everyone who enjoys Socialist Worker to donate as much as they can and help fund the resistance.

I SUPPORT THE APPEAL BECAUSE...

Unlike the mainstream media which does not display or support true struggle around the world, Socialist Worker is a vital instrument to use in struggle taking place both nationally and internationally. For example what is happening in Chile should be known by every worker,

and Socialist Worker has had extensive coverage and support for it. I support Socialist Worker and urge every worker to read Socialist Worker which is the paper of our class.

Mario Nain —
Chilean revolutionary



To donate go to socialistworker.co.uk/appeal

Call 020 7840 5607 or send a cheque, payable to 'SW Appeal' to PO Box 74955, London E16 9EJ

IN THIS WEEK

1975

Fascist dictator Franco dies

GENERAL Francisco Franco died on 20 November 1975.

The fascist had ruled Spain for over three decades.

His regime unleashed terror on trade unionists, the left and working class people.



Tories plan tax cuts for business as key services face crisis

by CHARLIE KIMBER

BORIS JOHNSON prepared for his television debate with **Jeremy Corbyn** this week by announcing a massive handout to the rich.

He demonstrated again the utter fakery of his claims to stand for ordinary people against the elite.

The Tories want to shower the rich with cash while services such as the NHS and education suffer.

On Monday Johnson promised bosses gathered at the CBI conference cuts in business rates and other tax breaks worth about £1 billion a year.

He claimed he would boost the NHS by cancelling his proposed cut in corporation tax from 19 percent to 17 percent.

But this still leaves the tax on business profits at a low rate—it was 28 percent in 2001.

Johnson also said a Conservative government would increase the employment allowance, which reduces employers' bills for national insurance contributions.

"This will amount to almost a half a billion pound tax cut for small business," said the Tory statement.

Yet a survey last week showed payouts to shareholders in major firms rose over six times faster than wages between 2014 and 2018.

Billion

The TUC union federation and the High Pay Centre said their analysis indicated that Britain's largest companies listed on the stock exchange handed out £1.7 billion a week to shareholders.

So it's no surprise that big business and its hangers-on are rallying openly against Labour, despite their anger with Johnson over Brexit.

The Financial Times newspaper warned its well-off readers last Saturday that "the Thatcher revolution is coming under threat" after Labour revealed its

BACK STORY

The Tories have unveiled plans to make the wealthy even richer

● Boris Johnson told the bosses' CBI conference on Monday that he would bring in more tax breaks

● He also wants to cut bosses' national insurance bills

● A report last week showed that payouts to shareholders have risen six times faster than wages

● Johnson's plans would increase the divide between rich and poor

● The bosses and their backers are rallying against Labour

plans to take back part of BT. The paper added, "Three big City investors said the announcement, coupled with Jeremy Corbyn's plans to take ownership of utilities including water and Royal Mail, as well as taking shares in public companies to give to workers, would have a huge impact across the investment market."

It quoted a "shareholders' rights group" leader saying Labour's proposals will "make the UK a no-go area for capital".

These are the opening shots in a war to spread panic and prepare for real destabilisation if Corbyn is elected.

But the truth about the Tories' failures continues to emerge. This week documents were revealed showing the NHS is running short of dozens of lifesaving medicines.

An internal 24-page document was circulated to some doctors last Friday. It listed

17 new drug shortages identified last week including drugs for cancer, Parkinson's, and some eye conditions.

This is not about Brexit. It's about manoeuvres by the drug companies to protect their profits and keep up prices.



BORIS JOHNSON speaking to the CBI conference on Monday

Labour set to bow to McCluskey demand to drop free movement

THE LABOUR Party looked almost certain to ignore party members' demands to include defending freedom of movement in its manifesto, set for publication this week.

Delegates at Labour's conference in September voted to maintain and extend free movement rights.

Freedom of movement allows people from European Union (EU) countries to live and work in Britain.

Yet in an interview on Sunday, Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn refused to say that freedom of movement will feature as one of the party's election promises.

It comes after Len McCluskey—leader of the powerful Unite union—said he would block the policy from being included in Labour's manifesto.

Labour's manifesto was set to be released on Thursday of this week. The party's national executive committee—which includes delegates from Unite—met on Saturday to agree on what should be in it.

McCluskey insisted ahead of the



Unite union leader Len McCluskey

meeting that freedom of movement shouldn't be included. Senior Labour politicians—including shadow home secretary Diane Abbott—failed to challenge him.

He claimed that people living in "forgotten towns and cities" want a cut in immigration.

Yet a recent YouGov poll found that 56 percent of people would back continuing freedom of movement with the EU after Brexit.

Labour politicians want to claim that their party supports migrants. Yet they also claim that bosses "exploit" migrants to lower wages—and that there must be "stricter regulations".

In practice "tougher regulations"—such as work visas or a "skills-based" system—mean restricting migrants' rights.

It's not true that migration lowers wages. Studies—such as the most recent report from the University of Oxford's Migration Observatory—have repeatedly shown that migration "has small impacts on average wages".

And restrictions on migrant workers makes it easier for bosses to underpay them.

Migrants in Britain on a work visa are at the mercy of bosses as their right to stay depends on whether they have a job.

The real solution to low wages is to organise all workers in unions to fight for higher wages.

Those struggles are made harder by claims that a section of workers cause the low wages of another. It is a concession to racist myths.

Protesters in Wales fight to win a 'Tory Free Zone'

by PATRICK CONNELLAN

UNDER THE banner of Operation: Make West Wales a Tory Free Zone we have organised a series of events to unseat two Tory MPs.

They are Stephen Crabb in Pembrokeshire Preseli and Simon Hart in the neighbouring constituency of Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire.

The campaign involves Pembrokeshire People's Assembly, Momentum West Wales and Socialist Workers Party members.

Our first event was a Crabb Must Go rally in Haverfordwest last Saturday. Up to 130 placard waving anti-Tories attended.

Labour candidate Philippa Thompson addressed the crowd along with trade unionists representing Unison and the FBU.



Kicking the Tories out of Wales

There was also a message from the CWU union.

Representatives from Stand Up to Racism West Wales, the People's Assembly Pembrokeshire, Momentum and Extinction Rebellion (XR) also spoke.

Cerith Griffiths, chair of FBU Wales, hit out at Boris Johnson's cuts to the London fire service that contributed to the 72 deaths in Grenfell

Tower. He attacked the "scapegoating of fire fighters" by the Grenfell inquiry.

A Hart Must Go rally is planned for Sunday in Carmarthen, along with a host of other events.

These include an LGBTQ+ hustings hosted by Pembrokeshire Plus, a Stop Climate Change hustings hosted by XR rebels, and a comedy night.

A backlash over broadband

LABOUR PARTY plans to nationalise parts of BT and provide free broadband to everyone in Britain prompted outrage from bosses and the right.

Shadow chancellor John McDonnell announced the proposal in a speech on Friday of last week.

Under the plans, the government would take control of the broadband and telephone network, and provide free superfast internet to every address by 2030.

Labour should go much further—and renationalise the whole of BT, along with the energy and



Shadow chancellor John McDonnell

water industries.

Yet even its modest proposal prompted a fierce backlash.

Prime minister Boris Johnson outlandishly called it a "crazed communist scheme".

And the top bosses of Internet providers, including Virgin media and TalkTalk, threatened nearly 200,000 job losses if Labour dares to try

and implement its plan. It's a sign of the resistance a Labour government would face if it dares to touch the companies that run public services for profit.

Taking on the utility companies, making sure Labour keeps to its promises—and pushing it to go further—will need struggle by working class people.

Brexit Party is not welcome

SOCIALISTS and anti-racists in Lancaster gave the Brexit Party the welcome it deserves last week.

Activists took over a room at The Robert Gillow pub, where the Brexit Party had

arranged a "meet and greet the candidate" event.

Audrey Glover reported, "Just seven Brexit Party supporters turned up and then shuffled off."

"We then agreed to hold our Socialist

Workers Party meeting in the pub.

"Anti racists, Labour and socialists 1, Brexit Party 0."

"Racist homophobes who want to abolish the NHS are not welcome in Lancaster."

Socialist Worker
WHAT WE THINK

WE MUST TAKE ON THE RICH TO WIN REAL CHANGE

WILL A Labour government fulfil Jeremy Corbyn's promises to "pull down a corrupt system and build a fairer country?"

Its manifesto, due to be released after Socialist Worker went to press, will be a good indication.

Labour has already said it will take back Royal Mail, water, the rail network and the National Grid from the privatisers.

We hope the manifesto goes further and plans to renationalise all the privatised industries.

There is no place for any private firm in vital public services.

Over three decades of privatisation and deregulation have seen more and more public services go into the pockets of the rich.

These need to be renationalised—under democratic control—without compensation for the bosses.

But real change also means tackling the influence and power that is maintained by a tiny minority of bankers and bosses.

These billionaires have got richer and richer while ordinary people suffer—so much so that now the richest 1,000 people in

British society are worth £771 billion.

Arch-privatiser Richard Branson is a good example. He's spent the best part of five decades amassing a £3.4 billion fortune, partly by chasing contracts to run health and rail services. Or there's Jim Ratcliffe—a petrochemical fat cat who grabbed his £18.2 billion by building a fossil fuel empire that's polluting our world.

If Corbyn tried anything serious against the billionaires, there would be a huge blowback from Bransons and Ratcliffes of this world.

There can be no compromise with them.

So it is disappointing that at

“If Corbyn tried anything serious against the rich, there would be a huge blowback

of the campaign is an app to direct activists to canvass in the constituency it deems best.

"Let's go teams" are organised via WhatsApp to run phone-banking sessions from their living rooms.

The idea is to encourage mass participation in Labour's election campaign. Yet the vision of a mass movement here is still one that sees the majority of people as passive consumers of Labour's message.

It sees people as the objects of

the annual conference of the CBI bosses' organisation Corbyn said a Labour government wasn't "anti-business".

Taking on the rich has got to mean more than a minor tax increase for the most well off in society.

It also means taking hold of the social, economic and political power in order to take on the rule of the rich, not just take some of their vast fortunes.

There will be huge resistance to any attempt to challenge business as usual.

Even Corbyn's announcement of free broadband in 11 years "sent a chill through boardrooms at home and abroad," according the CBI director Carolyn Fairbairn.

The general election campaign is only the beginning of this fight.

It will take a huge battle in workplaces and communities to deliver the kind of change that Corbyn is demanding.

And we want to go further to win a fundamentally different socialist society run by working class people.

This tiny minority of bankers and bosses aren't going hand over their power—we will have to take it from them.

WHATSAPP TO VICTORY?

MOMENTUM SAYS it's driving forward path-breaking campaigning methods that will win the election.

"Past a hallway strewn with bikes, a small nucleus of 20 to 30-somethings were glued to laptops and working to shape the Labour campaign," read one effusive Guardian article.

"At one end of the room a digital team worked on making videos for social media."

They're not just making videos and memes though. At the heart

ANTI-TORY AMMUNITION

To stock up on all the essential Socialist Worker election materials, contact us on 020 7840 5601, at enquiries@swp.org.uk or by writing to PO Box 74955 London E16 9EJ Prices incl. postage



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Pamphlet £2.50



BADGE 80p or 15 for £7



Is Margaret Thatcher's 'revolution' under threat?

ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



Neoliberalism takes revenge in Bolivia

BAD THINGS have been happening lately in Latin America. But the worst to date is the right wing coup in Bolivia that has forced president Evo Morales to resign and flee into exile in Mexico.

There is a stupid argument, involving even some on the left, over whether this actually was a coup.

Morales had been accused of fiddling the recent presidential election. This was allegedly to avoid going into a second round against the main right wing challenger, Carlos Mesa.

As opponents mounted increasingly violent protests, Morales backed down and offered another election. Mesa rejected this and refused to negotiate.

The police went on strike and the chief of the armed forces “suggested” Morales resign. There hasn’t—yet—been the kind of bloodbath associated with Latin American coups in the 1960s and 1970s, but that’s a coup.

What makes this situation so tragic is that Bolivia in 2003-5 represented the high point of what lay behind the so-called “pink tide”.

Centre-left governments took office across Latin America after the turn of the century. They represented a popular rejection of the neoliberal economic policies that had impoverished vast swathes of society since the early 1970s.

In Bolivia this took the form of a series of mass risings. First came the “water war” of 2000 over the privatisation of water in Cochabamba. Then there was the “gas war” of October 2003 over the privatisation of natural gas. This forced out president Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada.

Finally there was the second gas war of May-June 2005, which brought down Sánchez de Lozada’s vice-president and successor—none other than Carlos Mesa.

El Alto, the working class city above the capital La Paz, was central to the two gas wars. Mass mobilisations, general strikes, and blockades disrupting key transport routes organised from El Alto were decisive in bringing down two presidents.

Victory

The victory of Morales and his Movement for Socialism (Mas) in December 2005 was an expression of these enormous struggles.

The sad truth is, however, that in office Morales and the Mas have not fulfilled the hopes raised by this tremendous movement. Their government did reduce poverty, but its ambitions were limited.

Vice president Álvaro García Linera wrote that socialism wasn’t on the agenda in Bolivia and the objective was “Andean-Amazonian capitalism”.

A Marxist critic, Jeff Webber, argues that the Mas in office mainly used state power to build up the export-oriented agrarian capitalism centred on the eastern province of Santa Cruz. Peasant movements were essentially subordinated to this alliance of the state and capital.

These limitations don’t make the coup any less dangerous. “In Bolivia, social class is only understandable and is visible in the form of racial hierarchies,” writes García Linera.

There is an almost colonial division in which the descendants of the original inhabitants are subordinated to those perceived as white or of mixed race.

Morales was the first indigenous president. In 2010 the Mas steered through the Law of the Rights of Mother Earth. This promised a sustainable development and appealed to indigenous ideas of Mother Earth as sacred.

But once Morales faltered, the right mobilised to reverse the advances made by indigenous people, workers, and peasants—very much overlapping categories in Bolivia. This means not just defeating the mass movements that brought the Mas to office, but taking class and race revenge.

This is explicit by the now notorious tweet by the self-proclaimed acting president, Jeanine Anez Chavez, “I dream of a Bolivia free of indigenous satanic rituals.”

This is the language used by the 16th century Spanish Conquistadores when they sought to destroy the indigenous societies they had conquered.

The same class racism is also at work in Brazil under Bolsonaro and in the right wing opposition in Venezuela.

Morales and García Linera have abandoned their posts. But let’s hope that the mass movements that lifted them up in the first place can find the strength and unity to defeat the coup.

Students get prepared for the next global climate strike

Sarah Bates spoke to activists who are gearing up to take action next Friday

STUDENTS ACROSS the world are busy using the last few days before the next climate strike to hammer home the urgency of ecological catastrophe.

Climate activists are preparing to take to the streets in a global school student’s day of action on Friday 29 November.

Ciar is from the UK Schools Climate Network, an organisation that helps to coordinate the strikes in Britain.

He said they hope to build on the success of the global climate strike in September, when workers joined students on the street for the first time.

“The 20 September was so important to get the trade unions and the adults on our side—especially with the next strike being during the general election,” he told Socialist Worker.

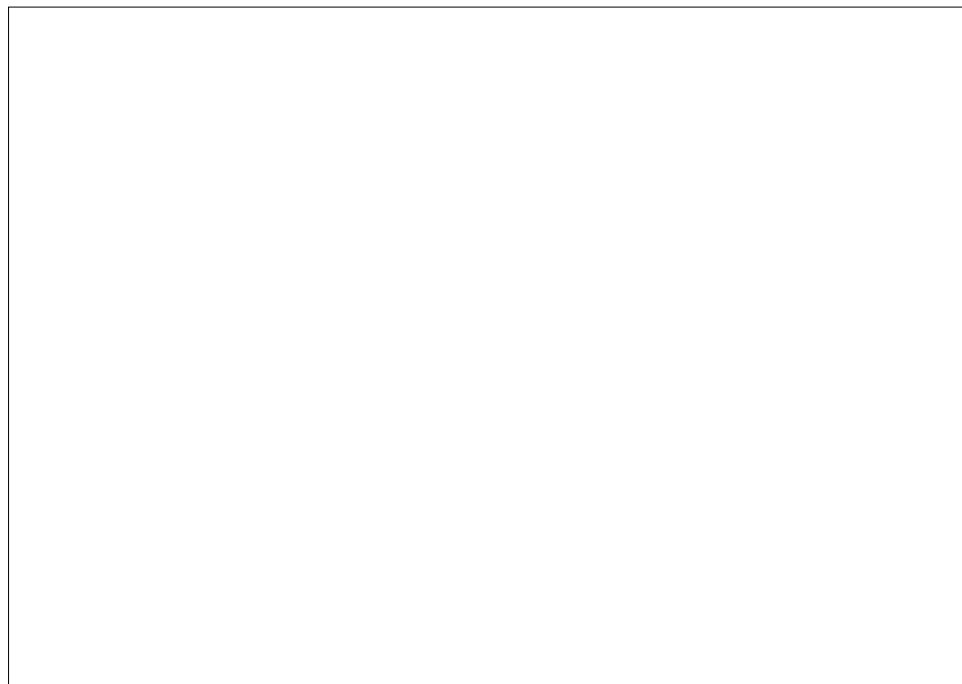
“If we get a Tory government, or a government unwilling to take action on the climate we’re going to be fucked.”

Protest group Extinction Rebellion has suggested its members lobby MPs to support action on climate change, and produce publicity comparing candidates’ records on the climate.

Siren

“We stand as a siren to warn whoever leads government that the house over which they rule is burning.”

“We seek to remind our leaders that everybody



PICTURE: GUY SWALLMAN

RESIDENTS BATTLE to stop the spread of flames in New South Wales (above) A climate striker in Britain (left)

more land than any other season in the last 25 years, said the state’s Rural Fire Service. Residents were battling widespread storms that battered parts of Queensland on Monday.

Catastrophic winds felled trees, and car windows were smashed by hailstorms.

Now drought looms, and people in some areas have been asked to limit their water consumption.

Fires have damaged the Cressbrook Dam pump station—the region’s largest source of water.

Toowoomba mayor Paul Antonio said, “I have never seen a scenario like this—it’s the perfect storm.”

He said the amount of land burnt out “was expanding by

the minute”. Residents have been issued with instructions to leave immediately as firefighters struggled to contain the blazes.

“This fire is out of control, we are doing all we can to contain it, but we will not risk limb and life,” said Antonio.

The crisis drove emergency services to breaking point.

Wayne Waltisbuhl from Queensland Fire said, “Across Australia it’s getting really tough to move firefighters around because all the states are now in their fire seasons.”

“We’re really at a bit of a pinch point at the moment.”

Got a story?
Email ideas to reports@socialistworker.co.uk

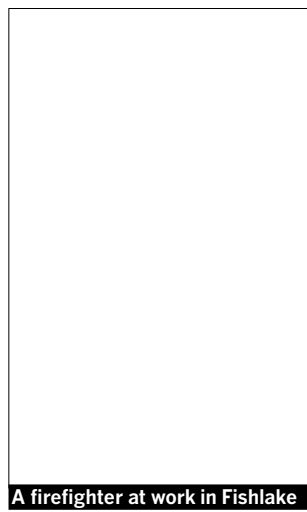
Anger at scale of floods in Fishlake

OVER 100 flood alerts were in place across Britain on Monday of this week.

Flooding continued in parts of Gloucestershire, Worcester, Oxfordshire and Lincolnshire following heavy rains last week. And in Doncaster, flood warnings remained in place after over a week of flood disruption.

Furious residents of the nearby village of Fishlake confronted Boris Johnson when he visited on Wednesday of last week.

One woman told him she “wasn’t very happy



A firefighter at work in Fishlake

about talking to you” while another said the government’s response was “too little too late”.

Some Fishlake residents may be unable to return home for three weeks, and some face ruin.

Pam Webb, whose spa was flooded in Fishlake, thought she was covered by insurance. But she then noticed an exemption cause for flooding.

“I feel like we’ve been failed,” she said. “If this is not managed, I fear it could happen again pretty soon.”

Sadie Robinson

JOIN THE SCHOOL CLIMATE STRIKE**Fri 29 November**

For details go to ukscn.org/events

Blaze burns ‘flammable cladding’ in Bolton flats

Students were lucky to escape with their lives after an inferno engulfed their privately-run accommodation

A FIRE tore through a block of student flats in Bolton, Greater Manchester, on Friday of last week. It did so by “crawling up the cladding like it was nothing,” according to eyewitnesses.

It was a terrible echo of the way that fire spread at Grenfell Tower two years ago.

Some 40 fire engines and 200 firefighters were sent to tackle the blaze at the six-storey building. Flames poured from the windows on the top floors of a building known as The Cube on Bradshawgate, in the centre of the town.

Two people were treated by paramedics at the scene.

Student Elise Millward who lived in the building said, “Lost everything in the Bolton fire. Lucky that we got out after false alarms constantly for weeks.

“I heard screaming and decided to check it out, had to scream at my flatmates it was a real fire. If anyone tries to tell me that no-one is at fault and it was safe they’re wrong.”

Another student tweeted, “My accommodation burned down tonight. I have no possessions left. The fire alarms didn’t go off in all flats.”

Firefighter Andrew Scattergood tweeted, “That’s flammable cladding burning on a block of student flats. Two years after Grenfell. Two years of warnings about the hundreds of buildings wrapped in flammable cladding.”

Charges

The Cube is owned by a private landlord, Urban Student Life (USL)—it says it charges from £98 a week to live in The Cube.

It appears that the building was re-clad in 2018, according to council records that show the private company Assent Building Control signed off on the decision.

This is normal practice following the privatisation of building control.

A recent survey showed there are up to 600,000 people living in blocks over 18 metres who cannot confirm the safety of their buildings’

BACK STORY

Over two years since the fire at Grenfell, lives are still at risk

● Bolton students reported that fire alarms didn’t go off in all flats

● Residents were assured the flats were safe in 2017

● But the flats were re-clad in 2018 and a private firm signed them off as being safe to live in

● There are still 169 private sector residential buildings with cladding systems unlikely to meet building regulations

cladding. Last year, it was reported that 54 student residential towers had material similar to that at Grenfell Tower.

Grenfell was covered with aluminium composite cladding panels with polyethylene cores—different from the high-pressure laminate (HPL) cladding used in Bolton. But HPL panels played a role in the spread of a fire at another London housing block, Lakana House, in 2009, which killed six people.

The government only began testing of HPL cladding in July this year.

This leaves hundreds of people at risk until the testing is complete, in March 2020 at the earliest.

Campaign group Grenfell United said, “there needs to be a national emergency. How many more people need to die before something changes?”

Matt Wrack, FBU firefighters’ union general secretary, said, “This terrible fire highlights the complete failure of the UK’s fire safety system.

“This is not how any building should react to a fire in the 21st century, let alone a building in which people live.”

Tory policies of privatisation and deregulation put people at risk.



On other pages...

The brutal reality of Tory rule
>>Pages 10&11

The fire at The Cube students’ accommodation in Bolton

Postal workers hit out at outrageous court ruling to stop Royal Mail strike

by NICK CLARK

POSTAL WORKERS were set to hold mass gate meetings at Royal Mail workplaces across Britain on Friday following a High Court ruling to stop them striking.

Members of the CWU union are furious after the court ruled that a national strike ballot of some 110,000 postal workers was unlawful.

They are determined to keep fighting in their battle against a major assault on their jobs and conditions by Royal Mail bosses.

Royal Mail chief executive Rico Back wants to break up Royal Mail, causing tens of thousands of job losses and an attack on working conditions.

Some 97 percent of Royal Mail workers voted on a 76 percent turnout to strike to stop him.

But the High Court ruled last week that the union’s campaign to win the ballot had breached the law by encouraging members to vote at work.

Judge Jonathan Swift, formerly one of the government’s chief law officers, also said that the coming general election was a factor in

making his decision. The CWU waged a high-profile campaign to beat the 50 percent turnout threshold demanded by anti-union laws, and to win a Yes vote.

But bosses said that the campaign breached the law because some workers opened their ballot papers at work then filmed and photographed themselves voting.

They argued in court that the union had created “a de facto workplace ballot”.

Undermine

Workplace ballots were outlawed by Margaret Thatcher’s Tory government to undermine union organisation.

The CWU said the ruling was a “genuine outrage”.

And general secretary Dave Ward said, “CWU members will be and are extremely angry and bitterly disappointed that one judge has granted Royal Mail an injunction to invalidate our ballot for strike action.

“Members participated and cast their vote of their own free will.

“To suggest otherwise is to insult the intelligence and

the integrity of thousands and thousands of good hard working people. This injunction is not only a massive injustice to our members it’s also an injustice to every worker in the country.”

Postal workers hit out at the ruling on social media. “The workers get shafted once again. Shock horror!” said one.

“Where is democracy? We have used our democratic right. This is a kick in the teeth to all the work force and to the 110,000 that voted.”

Others still wanted to take action in the form of a work to rule, and overtime ban or action short of strike.

Ward said the union “will be doing everything in our power to oppose the company’s industry-destroying plans and this decision.”

He said options included appealing the decision, and re-balloting for strikes.

Both of these would mean further delaying the possibility of strikes—meaning Royal Mail bosses get what they want.

The best response is to defy the law and strike anyway.

IN BRIEF

Israel kills over 30 Palestinians

ISRAEL KILLED unleashed a fresh round of bombings on the besieged Gaza Strip last week. Some 34 people were killed during a sustained two-day bombardment that followed the Israeli assassination of a Palestinian military leader.

The youngest victim of Israel's assault was Muaz al-Sawarka, just seven years old. And one strike killed eight members of one family, among them five children.

The violence started with a targeted air strike on the home of Bahaa Abu al-Ata, a commander in the resistance group Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

Of the 34 people killed by Israel's bombardment, as many as 16 were civilians. Some 111 people were also wounded, including 46 children.

Longer article online at bit.ly/swpalestine

Iran explodes over fuel hike

MASS PROTESTS have erupted in Iran after the government announced a dramatic increase in fuel prices last week.

People have taken to the streets blocking roads and clashing with police in a number of towns and cities.

Police responded with tear gas, and one person was killed during a protest in the city of Sirjan on Friday of last week.

Iranians have suffered years of austerity, high prices and high unemployment in a prolonged financial crisis caused by privatisation, corruption and economic sanctions.

The US has hypocritically backed the protests.

Yet its economic sanctions against Iran are a major cause of ordinary people's poverty and hardship.

Chile set to vote on constitution

AS PROTESTS continue in Chile, the government of president Pinera is making fake promises.

A general strike last week was huge, involving health workers, teachers, some miners, and others. Hundreds of thousands marched across the country.

Chilean MPs, backed by Pinera, announced last Friday they intend to hold a referendum on replacing the country's constitution in April 2020. It was drawn up during the rule of dictator Augusto Pinochet.

But many protesters are demanding a grassroots protest that they control in order to create a democratic body to look at the constitution and other key issues.

Brutal Hong Kong police aim to crush movement

by **SADIE ROBINSON**

HUGE BATTLES were taking place in Hong Kong as Socialist Worker went to press, as the authorities escalated their repression of pro-democracy protests.

Police surrounded Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU), in the early hours of Monday morning.

They blocked off entrances, trapping around 500 students inside.

Students who tried to leave were met with tear gas and threats of arrest.

One protester said, "I think everyone here shares the sentiment that we will fight fearlessly until our last breath."

PolyU governing council student representative Oiwan Li said Monday was "a heartbreaking day" for PolyU students.

"Forty people have shown signs of hypothermia after being sprayed by water cannon," he said.

"But because police have arrested or taken away more first aiders and emergency relief personnel, there are not enough resources to attend to the injured."

Around 100 protesters remained in PolyU on Tuesday morning, according to the cops. Police had arrested many, while dozens more escaped by abseiling down ropes on a bridge to waiting motorcycles.

Siege

Tens of thousands of protesters had headed towards PolyU earlier on Monday in an effort to break the police siege.

Reports described police with batons beating people who tried to escape the campus.

Protesters had occupied the PolyU campus since last week as part of a plan to hold a city-wide general strike. They built barricades

POLICE THREATENED protesters trying to flee the university

and set off explosives on bridges leading to the campus to try and fend off police.

Monday's crackdown followed days of big protests, strikes and battles between pro-democracy demonstrators and the cops.

Protesters blocked stations and targeted trains during protests on Wednesday of last week, forcing much public transport to be suspended. They fought police with bricks, petrol bombs and bows and arrows.

The Education Bureau suspended all classes, and said schools were not expected to reopen until Wednesday of this week.

Cops complained that the protest movement was bringing Hong Kong to the "brink of total collapse".

The death of a student has turned more universities into sites of explosive protests.

At the Chinese University of Hong Kong, protesters built barricades to protect against police tear gas and water cannon. The campus

was covered in slogans including, "Ideas are bullet-proof."

One student said, "I don't want to resort to violence, but peaceful protest doesn't change a thing."

The pro-democracy movement is now into its sixth month, despite the arrests of over 3,000 people since protests began in June.

The movement was sparked by a new bill that would have allowed extraditions of suspects to mainland China. But the issue became a lightning rod for wider discontent.

Unity can lead Hong Kong protesters to victory

THE AUTHORITIES in Hong Kong and China are desperate to paint the pro-democracy movement as unrepresentative, dangerous and futile.

Hong Kong's leader Carrie Lam last week branded demonstrators "extremely selfish" and said hopes that they would win their demands were "wishful thinking".

China's state-run People's Daily newspaper ran a front page on Monday arguing that there is "absolutely no room for compromise" with protesters.

It warned that attempts to challenge the system were "delusional" and "doomed to fail". And last week, China's state-run Global Times

newspaper compared protesters to "terrorists like Islamic State".

But the movement is shaking those at the top.

Lam has been forced to withdraw the extradition bill that sparked the protests. And last week the High Court ruled that her ban on protesters wearing masks is "unconstitutional".

The movement in Hong Kong is demanding radical changes. They include the resignation of Lam, more democracy, the release of jailed protesters and an investigation into the cops.

Lam Chi Leung, a revolutionary socialist in Hong Kong, addressed a Marxism in Scotland event earlier this

month.

He said "neoliberal policies, the exploitative behaviour of finance and the service of the government towards the rich" lie behind the protests.

He described how the movement has seen "broad participation of youths, widespread support from public opinion and the eruption of political strikes".

And he said such strikes had not been seen in Hong Kong "in over 50 years".

A number of the demonstrations since June have involved over a million people. Some have appealed to the Western powers to intervene.

Some oppose everyone in

China, not just its ruling class. This can feed a kind of Hong Kong nationalism and racism towards Chinese people.

Lam Chi said there are "political confusions and contradictions" within the movement. "Socialists need to emphasise the need for self-organisation of workers and students," he argued.

"Only by convincing the mainland Chinese people that Hong Kongers are willing to unite with them in struggle can we bring about genuine democracy and equality."

Solidarity call from US worker

ALONG WITH thousands of other home care workers in New York State, I work 24-hour days.

We care for the elderly and the sickest people who need around-the-clock care which is paid for through the government-funded Medicaid programme.

For doing this critical work in our society, many of us have become injured ourselves, some are permanently disabled. We have lost years with our own families.

I worked 24-hour shifts as a home attendant for 14 years. Working 24-hour shifts cost me a lot.

It hurt my relationships with my children and my husband.

In Honduras, I never saw 24-hour workdays. I worked in a garment factory ten hours a day. We had an hour break to eat. Nobody bothered you.

Honduras is very poor, yet we don't have 24-hour workdays. I came here for a better life. Why in the US which is so rich, why are there 24-hour workdays?

We have a government-sponsored sweatshop system here that forces mostly women of colour to work 24 hours straight for days in a row, while only paying for 12 or 13 of those hours.

Home attendants and other workers are calling on the governor of the state to end this shameful practice.

We're asking workers everywhere to tell governor Cuomo to stop the 24-hour workday.

Join our campaign at aintiawoman.org

Justa Barrios

Home care worker, New York

Sheku Bayoh's family betrayed by the system

I AGREE with the sister of Sheku Bayoh when she said last week that Police Scotland is institutionally racist.

Kadi Johnson was speaking after it was announced that a public inquiry will be held into her brother's death.

The day before Lord Advocate James Wolffe had confirmed that no police officers would be prosecuted in relation to the death.

Sheku died after being restrained by police officers in Kirkcaldy, Fife, in 2015.

Before he met the first two police officers who handcuffed him he had no injuries. Soon after his body was covered from head to toe in injuries, including a broken rib and haemorrhages in his eyes—a possible sign of asphyxiation.

In the past five years there have been eight deaths in the custody of Police Scotland.

I hope the new inquiry gives some justice.

Elizabeth Cairns
Glasgow

Labour Party's retreat over Kashmir is a worrying sign

I WAS enraged to hear that the Labour Party had declared the question of Kashmir to be a "bilateral issue" between India and Pakistan in which Labour will not interfere.

It has done this despite it being the site of one of the longest and most brutal occupations in the world. It has done it despite Indian prime minister Narendra Modi stripping Kashmir of its semi-independent status.

And it has done it despite Labour conference policy being for the right to Kashmir's self-determination.

The reason is pressure from Modi's BJP Hindu nationalists and their supporters in this country. They are circulating false

information saying that the Labour Party is anti-Hindu.

Modi's supporters' ideology of Hindu nationalism is dangerous. It seeks a highly centralised and authoritarian state.

The BJP is remaining true to the explicit agenda of Sangh Parivar, a family of organisations linked to the far right paramilitary Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.

The Hindu nationalism that fuels the BJP portrays Hindus—who make up 80 percent of the population—as involved in a long-term battle against numerous enemies.

These include Muslims, Christians, communists, and secularists.

Kashmir plays a critical part in this mythology. Kashmir is seen as the next battleground against Muslims.

In seeking to rule on the basis of race, religion, faith and fear, Modi has a lot in common with Donald Trump or Jair Bolsonaro.

This is why it is so shocking that the Labour Party is pandering to a right wing nationalism which does not represent all Hindus.

In Sheffield we are organising a conference to oppose the occupation and we need to put pressure on Labour to stop pandering to Modi—the divider in chief.

Maxine Bowler
Sheffield

Laws designed to stop a class response

THE JUDGE'S decision in the Royal Mail case that stopped the post strikes was very revealing.

Bosses argued that he union had created "a de facto workplace ballot".

This underlines one of the main motivations for the Tory anti-union laws that were introduced in the 1980s.

Prime minister Margaret Thatcher and her allies knew mass meetings created a sense of class solidarity and debate.

They wanted to break up the collective and democratic decision-making



Collective action is good

by workers together. Instead they wanted individuals, prey to all the pressures of the media and the bosses, to vote at home in secret.

Over the last few months, through its

workplace and social media campaigns, the CWU rightly tried to deepen collective resistance.

This is why the result of the ballot was so good. It will have shaken the bosses and the government.

I hope that the postal workers find a way to hit back, whatever the law says.

Regrettably the laws used last week will not be eliminated by the workplace reforms that the Labour Party has unveiled so far. Nor will individualised ballots.

Julie Doran
Stafford

Just a thought...

Keep fighting McDonald's

SOLIDARITY with McDonald's strikers from all of us in Unite union in Aotearoa.

We have successfully unionised McDonald's, abolishing zero hour contracts and youth rates, and raising the minimum wage from £4.60 to £8.85 an hour.

Joe Carolan
On Facebook

Responses to post strike ban

OUR READERS reacted after a court said a strike at Royal Mail was unlawful:

FREEDOM OF speech and the right to voice this to protect oneself or others is a basic of humanity. This right should never be opposed. Where has democracy gone?

Anita Lopez
On Facebook

■ NOW IS the perfect time to defy the law and strike. Kick the undemocratic Tory scumbags.

Colin Surrell
On Facebook

■ WORK TO rule.

Chez Branger
On Facebook

■ MASS SICKNESS that's all there is for it then.

Thomas Ness
On Facebook

Nurses' strike needs support

THE NURSES of Northern Ireland are bitterly angry at Tory cuts to the NHS and have voted to strike.

They are due to walk out on 18 December. It is vital that a solidarity campaign spreads the reasons for this unprecedented action.

Mark Drybrough
Newcastle

Thanks for my window poster

THE SOCIALIST Worker window poster attacking the Tories and supporting Jeremy Corbyn is a big hit in my household.

In my street there are posters for Labour, Greens and even the Lib Dems.

But when I put up the Socialist Worker one it got much more attention than the other ones.

Angela Haines
South London

THE BRUTAL REALITY OF TORY RULE

A decade of Tory rule has slashed key services, savaged spending and driven more people into poverty. And if they aren't kicked out, life for working class people is set to get worse, report Sarah Bates and Tomáš Tengely-Evans

THE NEWS that NHS waiting times have reached their highest ever level is a damning indictment of the Tories. Some 80,000 people waited four hours for a bed last month. One in ten people with suspected cancer hadn't been seen within two weeks.

And there are 43,000 vacant nurse posts across the NHS.

The Tories have spent a decade hammering the health service. But now there's a general election looming, they are trying to claim they'll invest in patient care.

To actually improve services England's NHS budget would have to increase by at least 4 percent a year. Yet the Tories' pledge of £20.5 billion by 2023-24 amounts to just 3.4 percent. That won't even undo the damage they have done (see box). And no one can trust their promises.

Paul is a health worker at charity Addaction, which runs an outsourced rehabilitation service that used to be part of the NHS. He told Socialist Worker that Tory cuts and privatisation mean "staff are breaking down in tears, going off ill on stress or leaving the job".

"I used to have a caseload of 40 clients who you would have time to see more frequently," he said. "I now have 70 to 80 clients—and that's after they said there should be a 'ceiling' of 65 a few years ago.

"You don't have any more time in the day and that means you can't do your job as well as you would like to."

Health services aren't just about administering medicine—and Tory cuts have undermined workers' ability to look after patients' overall wellbeing. Paul explained, "On Monday one of the clients overdosed and was taken into accident and emergency.

"You would normally go and see them to have a proper conversation, but there was no time to do it. I ended

FACT CHECK

● **130,000 "preventable deaths" in the last seven years due to Tory cuts in public health**

● **40,000 unfilled nursing posts in England.**

● **68,500 is the number they could rise to by 2024 because the Tories' decision to scrap the training bursary for NHS students**

● **10,000 unfilled doctor posts in England**

● **One month before you see your GP in 15 million cases**

● **Worst A&E waiting times on record—only 89 percent of patients seen within 4 hours compared to 95 percent target**

up finishing work late at 6.30pm and then I popped into the hospital at 7.30pm to see the client on my own time."

It's no wonder that the NHS is in such a mess. Since the Tories came into government in 2010, annual NHS spending increases have been the lowest in the service's history.

Under David Cameron annual spending increases were 1.4 percent—compared to 6 percent in the 2000s.

It's even lower than the 2.7 percent that former Tory prime minister Margaret Thatcher oversaw when she drove the NHS to breaking point in the

1980s. The NHS needs more money to meet the health needs of an ageing population.

And when the Tories have given with one hand, they have taken away with the other.

They previously promised £8 billion but only in exchange for NHS bosses forcing through £20 billion "efficiency savings"—cuts—by 2020-21.

That's why many NHS workers have welcomed the Labour Party's "rescue package" of £26 billion. Paul said health workers wanted "a change in government" because "it's just got to be better than the lot that's currently in".

Plan

Labour's plan would see annual spending increase to 3.9 percent. This would include 24,000 more nurses, 5,000 GP training places and free prescriptions.

There would be £5 billion for improving buildings and over £2 billion for mental health services.

That would be a much-needed boost—but bigger annual increases will be needed to actually improve services.

Labour also needs to go further on privatisation. Jeremy Corbyn has talked of "renationalising" the NHS. But so far Labour has only promised to make the NHS the "preferred bidder" for contracts, over private companies and charities.

In 2010 it was revealed that up to 14 percent of NHS spending went to administering the internal market.

Paul said, "The internal market and commissioning should go—money is wasted in this process. Whether it's companies or charities on NHS trusts that bid for services, they will spend thousands of pounds trying to get it.

"It should be going to the service and the patient."

To save the NHS, we need to kick out the Tories—and all the privatisers.



Vile attacks on the most vulnerable

FROM THE benefit freeze to the bedroom tax, the Tories have made slashing benefits a cornerstone of their austerity programme.

These measures, alongside the two-child limit for tax credits and other benefits and the rollout of Universal Credit (UC), have pushed more people into poverty.

Around 14.3 million people in Britain are in poverty, according to the Social Metrics Commission.

And 7 percent of the population is in deep poverty—where their income is at least 50 percent below the official headline.

UC has fuelled food bank use and rent arrears.

Gemma told Socialist Worker that UC means "many families go without food for long weeks at a time".

"We went through this ourselves," she added.

And she blasted the "long winded application process" that her and her husband went through to claim the benefit.

"Every month is a struggle," she said. "If you challenge them they will sanction you for no reason."

In areas where UC was

implemented first, food bank usage shot up as claimants are forced to wait at least five weeks for the first payment.

The food bank charity Trussell Trust reported that 70 percent of food parcel recipients said they needed the support because their benefits were insufficient, changed or delayed.

FACT CHECK

● **Around 2.3 million people are on Universal Credit (UC)**

● **It merges six existing benefits into one payment**

● **Around 1.9 million claimants lost £1,000 a year by transferring to UC**

● **Demand for food bank parcels shot up by a third in areas where UC had been in place for a year**

Emma Revie, Trussell Trust chief executive, said, "Our benefits system is supposed to protect us all from being swept into poverty.

"But currently thousands of women, men and children are not receiving sufficient protection from destitution."

Shirley is one of those forced to rely on food banks because of UC.

"I was thrown into an unknown world," she said. "I didn't have any money for three months while waiting for Universal Credit.

"I couldn't pay my rent and I had to work out whether to eat in the morning or the afternoon because I didn't have enough money for the basics."

Gemma argued that "the UC system needs to be scrapped in its entirety" and said the Department for Work and Pensions should be investigated over its treatment of claimants.

"They have no sympathy towards claimants, and they certainly do not encourage you to get back into work," she said. "They treat all claimants like scum."

Universal Credit needs to be stopped and scrapped—along with the Tories' wider vicious benefits regime.

Councils' cuts and privatisation hit hard

YEARS OF privatisation and cuts have left local government across England on its knees. And the future looks even bleaker.

One in three councils say that within five years they will struggle to provide statutory services in child protection and adult social care.

Ameen Hadi, treasurer of the Unison union branch in Salford City, spoke to Socialist Worker in a personal capacity.

He said cuts at Labour-run Salford City Council had slashed their workforce and budget by around half.

"A lot of the services that would have supported people in communities have just disappeared," he explained. "More and more, what is left is what the council is legally required to provide.

"The whole culture is about hitting targets and isn't necessarily about helping people."

Fall

Central government cuts have led to a 17 percent fall in council spending on public services since 2009/10, according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS).

Councils are increasingly forced to rely on local taxation to make ends meet—with the costs passed to ordinary people.

Since 2015, council tax has shot up on average by 15 percent per person.

Council tax arrears is the most common form of debt reported to the Citizens' Advice charity—and if residents miss one month's payments they can be chased for the full year's amount.

This drives people further into debt and poverty.

And the system is skewed against the poorest. One critical source of

FACT CHECK

● **Council spending has dropped by an average of £300 per person, per year**

● **In more deprived areas such as Blackpool, Kingston upon Hull, and Middlesbrough this rises to £432 worse off**

● **In a decade, spending per person has dropped 50 percent on cultural and housing services**

● **And funding has dropped by over 40 percent for transport**

funding from central government is the New Homes Bonus (NHB).

But the NHB is paid at a higher rate to areas with higher council tax bands—so those in poorer areas lose out.

Councils in areas of high levels of deprivation have historically relied on grants from central government. They have suffered the most from Tory cuts.

Ameen added that the funding formula has changed, giving Salford residents a smaller slice of the pie.

"Because we're in an area of high deprivation, we used to get more money allocated per pupil, or per resident," he said.

"They've got rid of that now—so it's not just that we need more money spent.

"We need a fairer division too." Councils in the most deprived

areas have slashed their net spending by 31 percent.

In the least deprived areas, the figure is 16 percent.

Ameen described "big battles" where service users and workers have fought to retain vital services such as day centres and transport for people with disabilities.

Even when services such as leisure centres have survived cuts, privatisation and high prices often keep out poorer residents.

Spending on adult social care services has dropped by an average of 7 percent per person in England.

And spending on social care for the over 65s age group is down by 18 percent. Yet the older population has grown by over 20 percent.

Savage council cuts, often made by Labour-run councils, have sparked strikes to defend vital services.

In Birmingham, home care workers staged long-running strikes against the Labour council.

Some see the solution as councils using their powers to raise taxes locally.

Local authorities can increase council tax by 4 percent a year and also adjust business rates.

But the IFS has warned, "Revenues from these two taxes will not keep pace with rising demands and costs."

It said an extra £1.6 billion of funding will be needed within five years to "meet projected adult social care costs and stop the revenue for other services falling further".

Raising council tax won't stop attacks on public services.

It's just another mechanism to make ordinary people pay for the crisis.

Fighting for decent public services will mean kicking out the Tories and demanding a Labour government implements the huge levels of investments needed.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

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To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } PUBLIC MEETINGS

BRIGHTON & HOVE

Boris Johnson—A Dangerous Man booklaunch
Thu 28 Nov, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
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{ SOCIALIST WORKER } BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

BARNLEY

What would a socialist society be like?

Thu 28 Nov, 7pm,
Room 302, The Civic,
Hanson St,
S70 2HZ

BIRMINGHAM

Who really rules Britain?

Wed 27 Nov, 7pm,
The Church at Carrs Lane,
Carrs Ln,
B4 7SX

BOLTON

Turkey, the Kurds and imperialism

Thu 28 Nov, 7pm,
Bolton Socialist Club,
16 Wood St (off
Bradshawgate),
BL1 1DY

BRISTOL

The politics of pollution—can our cities ever be clean?

Thu 28 Nov, 7.30pm,
YHA,
14 Narrow Quay,
BS1 4QA

CHESTERFIELD

Can the Green New Deal prevent climate catastrophe?

Thu 5 Dec, 7pm,
Chesterfield Library,
New Beetwell St,
S40 1QN

DERBY

Why does capitalism need borders?

Thu 28 Nov, 7pm,
West End Community Centre,
Mackworth Rd (next to
Britannia Mill), DE22 3BL

DUDLEY

Boris Johnson—A Dangerous Man booklaunch

Wed 27 Nov, 8pm,
The What Centre,
23 Coventry St,
Stourbridge, DY8 1EP

EXETER

The politics of pollution—can our cities ever be clean?

Wed 27 Nov, 7pm,
The Exeter peace shop,
31 New Bridge St,
EX4 3AH

HUDDERSFIELD

Why does capitalism need borders?

Wed 27 Nov, 6.30pm,
Brian Jackson House,
2 New North Parade,
HD1 5JP



Jeremy Corbyn, the general election and the fight for socialism today

BIRMINGHAM

Wed 4 Dec, 7pm,
The Church at Carrs Lane,
Carrs Ln,
B4 7SX

BLACK COUNTRY

Wed 4 Dec, 7.30pm,
St. Peter's Café,
4 Exchange St,
WV1 1TS

BRADFORD

Thu 28 Nov, 7pm,
Glyde House,
Little Horton Ln,
BD5 0BQ

CAMBRIDGE

Thu 28 Nov, 7.30pm,
Castle Street Methodist Church,
Castle St,
CB3 0AH

COLCHESTER

Thu 28 Nov, 8pm,
Hythe Community Centre,
1 Ventura Drive,
CO1 2FG

LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

Thu 28 Nov, 7pm,
The Swarthmore Education Centre,
2-7 Woodhouse Sq,
LS3 1AD

LONDON: HARINGEY

Thu 28 Nov, 7.30pm,
St John Vianney Church Hall,
386 West Green Rd,
N15 3QH

LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

Wed 4 Dec, 7.30pm,
William Morris Community Centre,
6-8 Greenleaf Rd,
Walthamstow,
E17 6QQ

MANCHESTER: CENTRAL

Wed 27 Nov, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
6 Mount St,
M2 5NS

LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE

In an era of climate change and racism—is socialism possible?

Thu 28 Nov, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Meeting House Ln,
LA1 1TX

LONDON: HACKNEY

Bolivia—the end of the pink tide in South America?

Thu 28 Nov, 7.30pm,
The Round Chapel,
2 Powerscroft Rd, E5 0PU

LONDON: ISLINGTON

Will fake news win the general election?

Thu 28 Nov, 7pm,
Elizabeth House,
2 Hurluck St, N5 1ED

LONDON: KINGSTON

How democratic is Britain?

Thu 28 Nov, 6pm,
Room JG3003, Penrhyn
Road Campus,
Kingston University,
KT1 2EE

LONDON: NEWHAM

After 39 die in a lorry—why socialists support free movement

Wed 27 Nov, 7pm,
Stratford Advice Arcade,
107-109 The Grove, E15 1HP

LONDON: SOUTH

Chile in revolt—neoliberalism & resistance

Wed 27 Nov, 7pm,
Vida Walsh Centre,
2b Saltoun Rd,
Brixton, SW2 1EP

LONDON: SOUTH EAST

Migration and climate change

Wed 4 Dec, 7pm,
Deptford Lounge,
9 Giffin St, SE8 4RH

LONDON: WEST & NORTHWEST

Hong Kong, mass protests and the working class

Thu 28 Nov, 7.30pm,
Woodlane Community Centre,
78 White City Cl,
Shepherd's Bush, W12 7DZ

NEWCASTLE

Who really rules Britain?

Wed 27 Nov, 7pm,
Floor 2, Commercial
Union House,
39 Pilgrim St, NE1 6QE

NORWICH

Why we say no to borders

Wed 27 Nov, 7.30pm,
Vauxhall Centre,
Johnson Place,
NR2 2SA

SHEFFIELD: CITY CENTRE

Why does capitalism need borders?

Thu 28 Nov, 7pm,
Central United
Reformed Church,
60 Norfolk St,
S1 2JB

SWANSEA

Was the fall of the Berlin Wall the end of socialism?

Thu 28 Nov, 7.30pm,
Brynmill Community Centre,
St Albans Rd,
SA2 0BP

YORK

The case for the revolutionary party

Wed 27 Nov, 7.30pm,
Sea Horse Hotel,
4 Fawcett St,
YO10 4AH

{ MOVEMENT EVENTS }

LONDON

Global climate strike

Fri 29 Nov, 11am
Parliament Square, London,
and in many other towns
and cities across Britain
For detail go to
ukscn.org/events/

DORCHESTER

After the election—reform vs revolution

Thu 19 Dec,
1.30pm,
Colliton Club,
Colliton Park,
DT1 1XJ

GLASGOW

St Andrew's Day anti-racist march

Sat 30 Nov, 10.30am,
Glasgow Green
G1 5DB

LONDON

No to Trump—No to Nato

Tue 3 Dec, 4pm, Trafalgar Sq

NATIONAL

March against racism on UN anti-racism day

Sat 21 March, 12 noon

London and Glasgow

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Unsettling and melancholy film about age and regret

The Irishman has everything you'd want from a Scorsese gangster film, writes **Simon Basketter**, but there's humour and sadness amid the violence

MARTIN SCORSESE is back doing gangsters with Robert De Niro and Joe Pesci for the first time since Casino in 1995.

The movie delivers mafia "hits", Italian restaurants, vintage suits and cars, wise guy patter and a compelling guide to the workings of the Mob.

But something feels different. The movie is an alternately sad, violent, and dryly funny biography of Frank Sheeran, a Mafia hitman and union bureaucrat.

The actors' faces have been rejuvenated by digital tricks, but time hangs over everything else.

It's about age, loss, sin, regret, and how you can feel like a passive object swept along by history even if you played a role in shaping it.

The film opens slowly, revealing the anonymous corridor not of a bar but of a Philadelphia nursing home.

Sheeran is old, crippled by arthritis and dying of cancer. Struggling with guilt and sadness he remains slightly self-righteous.

Both an elegy for the gangster genre and a last hurrah for acting legends, Scorsese's 25th film has the magnificence of a funeral and the humour of a wake.

At its centre is a road trip taken in 1975 by mob boss Russell Bufalino (Pesci) and his favoured hitman, Frank Sheeran (De Niro), to a wedding.

They make a few stops along the way for petrol, so their wives can smoke, and to collect money. And for some business involving their friend union leader Jimmy Hoffa (Al Pacino).

Pacino's shouty but tender-hearted portrayal contrasts nicely with Pesci underplaying gloriously, with eyes that mix ruthlessness and a twinkle.

De Niro and Pesci determine a man's fate merely with an exchange of looks. One beat. Two beats.

Masterfully

It is all masterfully acted and edited. Some of it is a gangland "Who's on first?" routine. But the overall effect is more unsettling and melancholic than you might expect.

The backdrop is big in historical terms—the Bay of Pigs and JFK's assassination scroll past—but the foreground is unfailingly intimate.

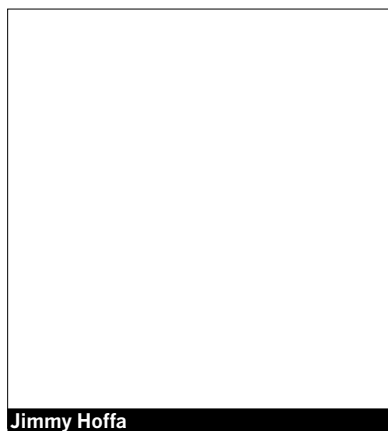
Friends are the only ones who can get close enough to take one another out.

Drained of all excitement, Sheeran's hits are abrupt.

Freeze-frames, once a way for Scorsese to replay the lushness of his portrayal of violence, are now a way of flashing forward with captions. "Allen Dorfman, shot eight times in the head in a Chicago parking lot,



ACTION AGAINST a big historical backdrop



Jimmy Hoffa

1983". But the film is oppressively male, perhaps deliberately so.

As Russell's wife Carrie, Kathrine Narducci has some brilliant seconds early on, but little after that.

Stephanie Kurtzuba as Frank's wife Mary, and Anna Paquin as the daughter Peggy who sees things she shouldn't have, are largely mute.

The final 20 minutes, in which a man approaches the end of his life and gains clarity on what was important is moving and powerful.

Sometimes what makes a good movie is that it makes you think about it and the things it raised afterwards. The Irishman is a good movie.

On Netflix from Wed 27 November

The real-life story of the unions and the mafia

AS PRESIDENT of the powerful but corrupt and gangster-linked Teamsters Union, Jimmy Hoffa was the US's best-known labour leader in the 1950s and 1960s.

Hoffa used the union's billion-dollar pension fund as a piggy bank to help the Mob build Las Vegas.

The government hounded him for a decade and finally sent him to prison in 1967. President Richard Nixon commuted his sentence in 1971 probably after being bribed.

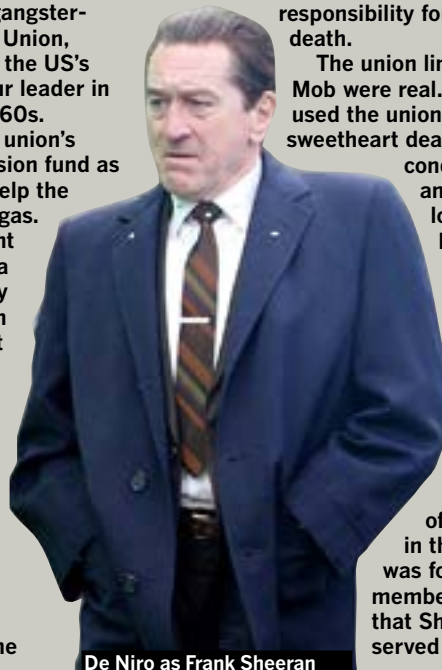
Hoffa was seeking to regain control of his union when he mysteriously vanished. Frank Sheeran is just one

of 14 people who have claimed responsibility for Hoffa's death.

The union links with the Mob were real. Gangsters used the unions to do sweetheart deals to keep

conditions bad and wages low for the bosses, and bureaucrats went along to have power and cash.

Sheeran was investigated for organising the murder of two rivals in the union. It was for stealing the members' money that Sheeran finally served time in jail.



De Niro as Frank Sheeran

ART

MAY MORRIS: ART & LIFE

Dovecot Studios, Edinburgh
From 28 Nov 2019–14 Mar 2020. Tickets from £8

THIS LANDMARK exhibition explores the life and work of May Morris, one of the most significant artists of the British arts.

The exhibition tells the story of Morris, who at age 23, took charge of the embroidery department of Morris & Co—the firm founded by her father, William. She was responsible for creating some of the company's most iconic textiles and wallpaper designs. It explores her



Wallpaper design by May Morris

extraordinary body of work, and why she deserves recognition.

With a focus on her role in the development of art embroidery—elevating needlework from a domestic craft to a serious art form—the show highlights the extent of her influence.

Seeking an alternative to the Art Workers Guild, which did not accept female members until as late as 1964, she also founded the Women's Guild of Art to provide a forum "to meet women who are not playing at art".

What's on at BOOKMARKS the socialist bookshop

Silenced by Sound—the Music Meritocracy Myth

With author Ian Brennan
Mon 25 November,
6.30pm. £2 on the door



1 Bloomsbury Street,
London WC1B 3QE
020 7637 1848
bookmarksbookshop.co.uk

Abolitionist, suffragist and soldier Harriet Tubman was born into slavery on a plantation in Dorchester County in the state of Maryland some time around 1825.

Headstrong and confident from a young age, she earned the wrath of her owners who banished her from domestic service to hard labour in the fields.

The brutality of those whose wealth flowed directly from the sweat of others in the corn, cotton and tobacco fields knew no bounds.

In her teens, an overseer threw a two pound weight that hit her on the head, fracturing her skull.

Tubman, who subsequently suffered a lifetime of seizures, lay without medical care for two days before being returned to graft on the plantation.

From that time on her friends remember her talking as though she were speaking directly with god. They also recall her falling asleep in the middle of conversations, only to reawaken, as if nothing had happened.

Her life might have followed this path for decades to come.

But when Tubman's masters sold her sisters to slave owners in the Deep South, she resolved that this would not also be her fate.

In September 1849 she convinced her brothers to join her in a bid for freedom. They escaped together but the boys grew fearful and decided to turn back. Tubman went on alone.

Protection

For protection she changed her name from Araminta Ross, taking the Harriet from her mother and the Tubman from the husband she had recently married, but who had discouraged her escape plans.

"There was one of two things I had a right to", she explained later. "Liberty or death. If I could not have one, I would have the other."

The path was hard and treacherous. Fugitive Slave Acts led to an abundance of bounty hunters looking for runaways—and large rewards. They scoured well-known trails that led eventually to either Canada or Mexico.

But help was also to be found on the way.

A network of abolitionists, secret routes and safe houses—known as the Underground Railroad—helped escapees make it to freedom. Tubman was first aided by a white woman Quaker and by others further on the road.

Guided by the stars, she headed north into Pennsylvania—a journey of 90 miles, many of which she trod in woodlands in pitch



CYNTHIA ERIVO as Tubman in the new film, Harriet

TUBMAN—FREEDOM FIGHTER

Ahead of a new film telling the story of Harriet Tubman, the escaped slave who helped others on their way to freedom, Yuri Prasad celebrates the life of a legend



Harriet Tubman

darkness. Tubman was free in Pennsylvania but could not enjoy liberty while her family remained captive.

Over the next eleven years she returned to Maryland as a "conductor" on the Underground Railroad 13 times, helping around 70 people escape—including her four brothers, her parents and a niece.

She generally made the trips in winter, when the long nights gave her cover and even the greediest bounty hunters



She became the first woman in US history to lead a military expedition

preferred the warmth of their homes.

As notoriety of this unknown hero grew, so the trips became ever more dangerous.

But Tubman became a master of disguise and began carrying a gun for protection.

The gun was not only aimed at those wanting to capture her, but also at any fretful runaway that wanted to turn back to their masters.

"Go on or die," she told them. "A dead fugitive could tell no

tales." New laws made the job of getting former slaves to freedom more difficult.

Simply reaching the Northern states was no longer safe enough—getting her groups to Canada was now Tubman's task.

The American Civil War began in April 1861, just months after Tubman's final mission to Dorchester County.

Slavery was at the heart of the four-year conflict which saw the death of around 600,000 people out of a population of just 30 million.

Leaders of the Southern states, known as Confederates, fought to defend the slavery system they depended on. In the North, the ruling class backed the ideology of "free labour" because their system increasingly depended on industrialisation.

FOR A time it seemed that neither side could win. But when the leaders of the North made a turn towards fighting the war in a revolutionary fashion things changed.

The promised abolition of slavery in the South led hundreds of thousands of black people to join the Union Army.

Freed slave and radical campaigner Frederick Douglass wrote, "The American people and the government at Washington may refuse to recognise it for a time, but the inexorable logic of events will force it on them in the end—that the war now being waged in this land is a war for and against slavery."

John Andrew, the abolitionist governor of Massachusetts, was one of the pioneers of the revolutionary war.

He knew of Tubman and asked her to head to the South and assist the "Contrabands"—the escaped slaves hoping to join the Union forces.

Tubman agreed and volunteered in Fort Monroe, Virginia, from where she went on covert missions to free enslaved people, encourage escape and conduct surveillance.

She scouted the most dangerous areas prior to battles to bring back vital information and cultivate contacts.

The great weapon of the war turned out to be anti-racism.

Rebellion

That the North could go deep into enemy territory and subvert the enslaved people into open rebellion demoralised the South.

Now the slavers were forced to fight on the frontlines, where they increasingly faced militant black soldiers fighting in newly commissioned regiments.

They also had to be ever fearful at home on their plantations.

Tubman became the first woman in US history to lead a military expedition during the daring Combahee River Raid of 1863. She guided three

steamboats of Union troops around Confederate mines in the waters bordering a number of important plantations.

Once ashore the troops burned everything in sight. Smoke from the burning fields mingled with those of the raided buildings.

Food and supplies were thoroughly looted.

On the sound of the steamboats' whistles, hundreds of slaves came running out of hiding to join the troops on board.

Some 750 slaves were freed, with women wading into the water carrying their young children around their necks. "I never saw such a sight," Tubman recalled.

THE SPIRIT of the time was infectious, with one white Michigan sergeant writing, "The more I learn of the cursed institution of slavery, the more I feel willing to endure its final destruction."

"Abolishing slavery will dignify labour—that fact, of itself, will revolutionise everything."

The Confederate forces finally surrendered in April 1865, but dreams of equality were to be cruelly dashed.

After the war came a period of "reconstruction" in which freed slaves were allowed to vote.

Hundreds of black people were elected to state government and some even to Congress and the Senate.

But when the old plantation managers started a counter-offensive, using the Ku Klux Klan as a weapon, the Northern ruling class refused to use their power to strip the Southerners of theirs.

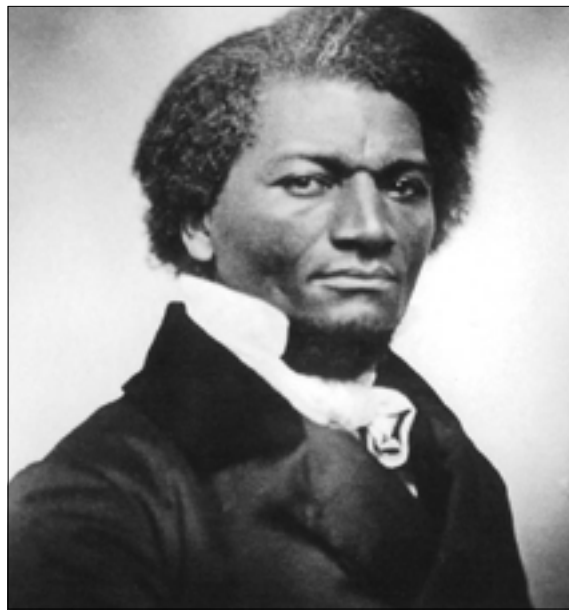
Instead racial segregation became the law of the new South.

During her three years of military service Tubman received just \$200—about £2,300 in today's money.

Hard

And, like so many black former soldiers, after the war she faced desperately hard times.

She appealed to the federal government for additional compensation, for which she won some



Frederick Douglass (top) Black soldiers in the American civil war (above)

substantial backing, but her campaign took 30 years before she saw any results.

Only in the 1890s did she start receiving a military pension, and even that was because of her late husband's war time service.

Her own contributions were never recognised by the state in her lifetime and Tubman died of pneumonia in 1913.

But there were many people, black and white, who knew exactly what she had done and they were determined her memory should not fade.

When her friend, the children's novelist Sarah Hopkins Bradford, wrote a biography of her, she called it "Tubman, the Moses of Her People."

Harriet is in cinemas from Friday 22 November

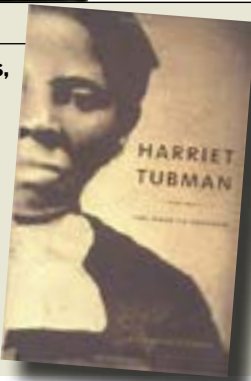
READ MORE

● **Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom** by Catherine Clinton £16.00

● **The American Crucible** by Robin Blackburn £14.99

● **Capitalism and Slavery** by Eric Williams Online at bit.ly/1mXVv8t

Available at Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop. Phone 020 7637 1848 or go to bookmarksbookshop.co.uk



COMMENT

Cracks in US ruling class are chance to dump Trump

US establishment figures hope they can impeach Trump over 'Ukrainegate'. We need to go beyond their narrow differences, writes Gabby Thorpe

THE POSSIBLE impeachment of Donald Trump is what many of his opponents have been waiting for.

An investigation is underway into Trump's attempts to undermine Joe Biden, his potential opponent in the 2020 presidential election.

Trump wanted to pressure Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky to investigate Biden's son.

From 2014 to 2019 Hunter Biden sat on the board of Ukrainian gas company Burisma Holdings, which has been at the centre of multiple corruption allegations.

At the time Joe Biden, then vice president, was pushing for more aid to Ukraine.

Trump has repeatedly called the investigation a "witch hunt". He has denied that the US withheld military aid to Ukraine in order to pressure Zelensky to call an investigation into Hunter Biden.

Details

But last week new details emerged about a call between Trump and the US ambassador to the European Union, Gordon D Sondland. In the phone call, he allegedly expressed a strong interest in "investigations of Biden".

This new detail is a damning blow for Trump.

Many media outlets have speculated that the investigation could put an end to the Trump administration. It is certain to make his upcoming election campaign more difficult.

But it is not necessarily going to be the final blow—and the opposition should not become complacent.

Trump would not be the first president to win a second term while embroiled in a scandal.

The Watergate scandal in June 1972 saw Republican



UKRAINIAN PRESIDENT Volodymyr Zelensky (left) with Donald Trump. Richard Nixon (below)



president Richard Nixon order a break in at the Democratic Party offices. It was an attempt to get dirt on his opponents before the 1972 presidential election.

But despite Watergate and a crippling defeat in the Vietnam War, Nixon was able to win a second term. He resigned in 1974 with the mounting possibility of impeachment.

It seems ridiculous that such a massive abuse of power didn't stop Nixon from winning.

And if he could still win, it seems likely that Trump will pull off the same feat.

But Nixon's demise was part of a wider ruling class

crisis that had been brewing since the previous decade.

A strong anti-war movement at home and defeats abroad widened the cracks at the top of society and ultimately led to his resignation.

That experience underlines that Nixon's resignation was entangled in wider issues of imperialism and war. It included revelations about covert bombing of Cambodia.

Impeachment

In contrast today, the danger is that the impeachment is narrowly focused on splits between different sections of the ruling class.

The military and bosses, who don't trust Trump, may seek to oust him for alleged links with Russia.

But for now, Trump is continuing to get away with warmongering and attacks on migrants. And as the impeachment inquiries dominate headlines it is likely that Trump will use it as a distraction to push through more dangerous policies.

There isn't the same kind of mass movement that caused Nixon to resign.

But—as recent strikes have shown—a movement for change is still possible.

People should take to the streets and say no to Trump. That includes people in London coming out in force when he visits Britain on 3 December for the Nato warmongers' summit.

No to Trump, No to Nato, Tue 3 Dec 4pm Trafalgar Square. Go to bit.ly/notrumpnato



The Watergate scandal was entangled with wider issues of imperialism



Refugee child dies due to EU's border hell

by NICK CLARK

THE EUROPEAN Union's (EU) border policy has caused the death of a nine month old baby in one of Greece's vast, overcrowded refugee camps.

The baby, the child of Congolese refugees, died of dehydration in the Moria refugee camp on the island of Lesbos. It comes after a fire in the camp killed one person at the end of September, leading to riots.

Some 14,000 people live in the camp, which is only built to house 3,000. It's just one of many overcrowded camps in Greece—the result of an EU border system designed to keep refugees out of Europe.

Crossing

There has been a sharp increase in the number of people trying the dangerous sea crossing from Turkey into Greece over the past few months.

More than 45,000 refugees have arrived in Greece by sea this year—compared to 32,500 in all of 2018.

Rather than offer them



SQUALID CONDITIONS in Moria refugee camp in Greece

safety, the Greek government has promised to speed up their deportations at the behest of the EU.

Much of this is the legacy of Greece's previous government led by the once-radical left wing Syriza party.

Thanks to a deal signed between the EU and Turkey in 2016, refugees entering Greece are captured, held and "processed".

Those whose asylum applications are deemed to have failed are deported back to Turkey. The result is that

tens of thousands of people fleeing war and poverty are forced into squalid camps for months and years on end while they await their fate.

One camp on the island of Samos holds 3,745. It was built for 640.

Gerogios Stantzos, the

island's mayor, said refugees in the camp are "at risk from fires and floods".

Riots and outbreaks of disease inside the camps are becoming more common.

"People are camping in dry stream beds," Stantzos said.

"The situation is not

manageable. It gets worse every day. We are past the red line."

Faced with a rise in arrivals, Greece's new right wing government has passed a law to drastically increase the number of deportations.

Targeting

Meanwhile, far right forces—currently isolated by the near total collapse of the Nazis' Golden Dawn party—are trying to rebuild.

Feeding off the racist climate fostered by the EU and anti-migrant laws, they are attempting to organise protests against "overcrowding".

One Nazi group held a "pork barbecue" near a refugee camp, believing this would provoke Muslim refugees.

Anti-racist group Keerfa has held counter-demonstrations in response. Led by refugees, they have also marched in Athens against the new deportation law.

A statement from Keerfa said, "We have the power to reverse the racist measures."

"We are fighting to open the borders for safe transportation, and to give asylum to everyone."

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University workers mount a fight for future of education

Tens of thousands of UCU union members are preparing for their return to the picket line. **Sadie Robinson** talks to activists about how they're building solidarity—and how to win

UCU UNION members are striking for more than just winning a one-off pay rise or defending a single pension scheme.

They want to push back attacks on education that have turned universities into businesses that fail students.

One worker tweeted that they were striking “because my students put a lot of effort into their work and they deserve more than 20 minutes to mark and give feedback, which is what my university allows me”.

Some bosses have painted the strikes as damaging to students. But strikers disagree.

Sarah Scuzzarello, a researcher at Sussex university, said, “Be reassured we do think of students.

“It is because we care about HE that we cannot continue having more than 50 percent of staff on temporary contracts, or teaching absurd hours.

“Precarity is making people ill, and those who can move or leave academia. The stress and anxiety it causes is enormous.”

She said she had worked at four universities on temporary contracts since 2010. “My life is good in many ways, but I’m tired of precarity,” she said.

For all the attempts of university management to divide people, the strikes have won support from students.

Julie, president of the UCU at Lancaster university, said, “During our strike last year, the university sent messages to students telling them they couldn’t join picket lines.

“Now Labour councillors who are students put in a really good motion in the student union to support the strike.”

She said students are backing workers taking action because they know



STRIKE PLANNING meetings have been packed

PICTURE: UCL-UCU/TWITTER

that the struggle is about improving education.

“Students understand that the vice chancellor could do something about this,” Julie explained.

“They do have agency—the power is in their hands.

“In the first year, you can have 300 students in a class. Students want more staff so they can see staff more. Investment in teachers is more important than shiny new buildings.”

Zamzam Ibrahim, president of the NUS students’ union, sent a message to students urging them to support the strikes.

“Your lectures will be cancelled, you might have to avoid going to the library, you might have to rearrange that site event that you’ve organised,” she said.

“We just can’t afford to be neutral. Being neutral means that your voice is being disenfranchised and co-opted.”

UCU members have planned different themes on their strike days. They plan to hold joint actions with climate strikes on Friday 29 November, and to be part of the protests against Donald Trump on Tuesday 3 December.

Many plan teach-outs that can bring strikers, students and non-striking university staff together—for a different kind of education.

For a full list of universities that will be involved in the strikes go to bit.ly/60Uni

‘We don’t want token commitments, we want change’

UCU MEMBERS at over 60 universities struck last year to defend their USS pension scheme. This transformed union branches with thousands joining the union.

New union members took responsibilities in union branches and helped run the strikes. And after the union leadership called off action for a shoddy deal, the action showed the importance of rank and file workers taking control of disputes.

Workers at many universities have set up strike committees

to help organise picketing, solidarity and make the strikes as effective as possible.

Julie said, “We have the local community centre booked each day so we can have a daily strike meeting.

“That’s really important because it’s somewhere everyone can come and we can see where we’re at, and plan other activities.”

Carlo said, “We don’t want token commitments, we want real change. Not just promises to do something in five years’ time, but material changes



Campaigning to save pensions

that we can measure.”

Many UCU branches that voted for action but missed the 50 percent turnout threshold needed for legal strikes will reballot. Some needed just ten or 15 more yes votes to beat the threshold. But unfortunately the union has put back the reballots until the new year.

“They should have been reballoted immediately,” said Carlo. “We need to start talking about a second wave of action in the New Year and the union should name further dates.”

Bosses ignore key report

A STRIKE by UCU members last year to defend their USS pension scheme ended with the setting up of a Joint Expert Panel (JEP). It aimed to look at the future of the scheme, listening to arguments made by the union, the bosses’ UUK group and USS.

An initial JEP report said members of the USS scheme should pay no more than 8 percent of salary in contributions. Bosses have failed to implement these recommendations.

Instead, USS imposed a 0.8 percent rise in contributions in April. And contributions are set to rise to 10.4 percent in October, and to 11.7 percent in April next year.

The union rightly says workers should suffer “no detriment”. They shouldn’t pay more, or get less when they retire.

The next JEP report was postponed. Some activists have asked whether the publication has been delayed because the report will once again back up the union.

“Maybe they don’t want it to come out because it will fuel the strikes,” said Carlo.



Calling for ‘no detriment’

IN BRIEF

Tim Roache wins union leadership

GMB UNION general secretary Tim Roache was re-elected last week.

The incumbent Roache received 61 percent of the vote in the general secretary election.

His challenger, GMB official Kathleen Walker Shaw, won 39 percent. Walker Shaw, who received 57 nominations for the election, was initially deemed ineligible to stand by a union committee.

Workers dip into struggle over pay

AROUND 1,000 workers at food manufacturer Bakkavor have voted for strikes against a “paltry” 1.5 percent pay rise.

The Unite union members at the Spalding factory in Lincolnshire produce meals and snacks sold at supermarkets, including hummus and taramasalata.

Workers don’t want their pay docked

CAR manufacturer Volkswagen could face serious disruption if logistics workers vote for strikes over pay.

Drivers at the GB Terminal (Southern) firm move new Volkswagen vehicles Sheerness Docks in Kent. The Unite union ballot closes on Monday 2 December.

Plastic workers consider strikes

STRIKES COULD hit plastics manufacturer Formica’s factory in North Shields unless bosses return to pay negotiations.

Unite union members at the factory have voted for strikes after demanding a pay increase in line with inflation.

They were only offered a 1 percent rise alongside two days extra Christmas holiday that would be available for this year only.

St George’s guards want pay equality

SECURITY GUARDS at St George’s university in Tooting, south London, have voted by 90 percent for strikes.

The UVW union members work for subcontractor Noonan at the University of London medical school.

They are demanding full equality of pay and terms and conditions with workers directly employed by the university staff.

The workers also want to be brought back in house.

UVW says that the university has confirmed that bringing outsourced workers in house would “after an initial capital investment, be cost-neutral or give rise to savings”. “With the financial excuse out of the way, what’s left?” the union said.

GRENELL FIRE



CAMPAIGNERS JOINED the Silent Walk for Grenfell in west London on Thursday of last week. It was the first monthly walk since the interim report of the first phase of the Grenfell Tower fire inquiry was published earlier this month.

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Library workers stage fourth round of action

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

LIBRARY AND museums workers in West Yorkshire began their fourth round of strikes against “devastating cuts” on Monday.

The Unite union members are fighting against Labour-run Bradford council’s plans to push through nearly £2 million of cuts by 2021.

The 70 workers have already staged five walkouts this autumn.

John, a Unite union rep, said, “My fellow workers and I can’t stand by and allow these devastating cuts to Bradford’s libraries and museums to happen.

Terrible

“They will have a terrible impact on the city’s cultural and educational heritage.”

He added, “The library and museums’ staff have been buoyed up by the great support we have had from the general public in our campaign.

“It is for the benefit of all of Bradford’s residents.” The



Bradford library workers on strike

PICTURE: NEIL TERRY

workers plan a five-day strike from Monday 2 December.

Meanwhile, library workers in Bromley in south east London have unanimously voted to keep up their indefinite strike.

The Unite union members have been on indefinite strike since June against subcontractor GLL’s plans to slash jobs.

Unite regional officer Onay Kasab said it would mean “a continuous, indefinite strike into the new year”.

Our members, who have

shown great courage and resolution over many months, have once again sent a very clear message to GLL,” he said.

Kasab said that workers had voted “by 100 percent to support the campaign to defend jobs and the library service”.

●Tweet support to Bradford strikers at @UniteNEY Send donations to the Bromley strike fund—account name Bromley Unite LE/531, account number 20272821, sort code 60-83-01

CIVIL SERVICE

Walkouts at tax office to give poverty pay the boot

CLEANERS AT HMRC tax offices in Liverpool and Bootle were set to strike on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of next week.

The PCS union members are demanding a wage of £10 an hour from bosses at outsourcer ISS.

The cleaners have already struck several times this year—but so far bosses at HMRC and ISS are refusing to engage with the union. Yet

the workers are determined to keep going. An indefinite strike by cleaners and caterers at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy forced ISS to pay them a living wage.

The HMRC workers also plan strikes on 2, 3 and 4 December.

●For details of picket lines, strike rallies and other ways to support the strike go to bit.ly/HMRCcleaners

EDUCATION

Strikes to school bosses

NEU UNION members at St Catherine’s Catholic School for Girls were set to strike on Thursday of this week.

Workers at the south east London school are challenging what they call bullying from the head teacher, Yvonne Connolly.

NEU district secretary for Bexley Debbie Jones said this includes banning union meetings and suspending the NEU rep. The walkout follows six days of strikes since 30 October.

●Send messages of support to Deborah.jones@neu.org.uk

■WORKERS AT Salford City College began a three-day strike on Tuesday over bosses’ refusal to implement a national pay and conditions agreement.

The NEU union says this will snatch around £600 a year from lower paid staff. The walkout follows a two-day strike last week and a 24-hour strike on 30 October.

●Send messages of support to cawton.wright@neu.org.uk

■WORKERS AT Roe Green Infants & Strathcona school in Brent, west London, were set to strike on Wednesday of this week over compulsory redundancies.

NEU union members there have already struck four times over a plan to close the school.

Their action pushed Brent council to reconsider the plan—but it is now back on. Fortunately, workers had already vowed to continue with their strikes to keep up the pressure.

●Send messages of support to jennifer.cooper@neu.org.uk and john.roche@neu.org.uk

■WORKERS AT Moulsecoomb primary school in Brighton, Sussex, were set to walk out on Thursday of this week over a plan to forcibly turn the school into an academy.

The New Horizons Academy Trust plans to take over the school.

●Send messages of support to paul.shellard@neu.org.uk

CLEANERS

Cleaners win solidarity

THE QUIET streets of Hornsey, north London, were rocked by a loud and musical picket of cleaners on Tuesday of last week.

The 14 cleaners are employed by Lakethorne Cleaning Services on a contract to Highgate Wood School.

Their demands include the London Living Wage, sick pay, overtime pay, and holiday entitlements.

They belong to the Cleaners and Allied Independent Workers Union (Caiwu) and all hail from Latin America.

In a powerful display of



Highgate Wood strikers

solidarity the teachers at Highgate Wood joined the picket line and handed over a workplace collection of £450. **Simon Hester**

HIGHER EDUCATION

UCU UNION members at Coventry university were set to strike on Thursday of this week. The walkout is the first of five planned strikes over a new appraisal process.

Workers plan further strikes

on 26 and 29 November, and on 3 and 4 December.

They plan to begin action short of a strike, including a boycott of the appraisal system and marking, from 5 December.

COLLEGE

Notts College agrees deal

WORKERS AT Nottingham College have voted overwhelmingly to accept a deal to end a long-running dispute. Some 15 days of strikes by UCU union members—and the threat of more—has blocked bosses’ attempts to drive down their pay and conditions.

Management wanted to impose new contracts that would have slashed pay, scrapped protections on workload, cut sick pay and holiday entitlement.

A new deal means bosses

agree to retain workload protections and avoid pay cuts. Cuts to sick pay have been ruled out and holiday entitlement is set to stay at current levels for two years.

Negotiations on a new pay framework and workload agreement will continue.

UCU members last week voted by 90 percent to accept it after the branch recommended a Yes vote.

Workers are now more confident that they can beat back any attacks in the future.

IT

Bosses don’t give Atos

WORKERS AT IT firm Atos were set to strike against a “derisory pay offer” on Monday of next week.

The PCS union members are demanding a 5 percent pay rise and a minimum salary of £20,000 a year. They provide IT services at the National Savings and Investment bank, the personal independence payment benefit and the BBC.

HEALTH WORKERS

Hundreds strike to fight privatisation

HUNDREDS OF health workers in Berkshire and Surrey began a two-day strike against privatisation on Monday.

Cleaners, porters and other support staff are fighting against Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust's plans to outsource their jobs to a wholly-owned subsidiary.

The trust, serving people to the west of London, would remain the sole shareholder of the privately-registered company, but workers say it's a stepping stone to full privatisation.

GMB and Unite union members mounted joint picket lines at Frimley Park Hospital, Wexham Hospital in Slough and Heatherwood Hospital in Ascot.

Chain

They held a march in Slough town centre on Monday and a "Hands off the NHS" human chain outside Frimley on Tuesday.

Jesika Parmar, a Unite regional officer, said, "The protests demonstrate the depth of anger at what we believe is the biggest proposed wholly-owned subsidiary in England."

"Our members have voted overwhelmingly that they have no wish to be employed by a wholly-owned subsidiary designed to avoid paying tax. They are concerned that their pay and employment



PICKETING AT Wexham hospital on Monday

PICTURE: GMB SOUTHERN REGION ON TWITTER

conditions will be seriously eroded and that it will lead to services for patients being adversely affected."

Wholly-owned subsidiaries allow NHS bosses to undermine pay and conditions, making services more attractive for private companies.

The Unison union wrongly backed off from joining the action after bosses' gave "assurances". Steve

Torrance, Unison south east regional secretary, said, "Unison will take no further action for the time being and as a result the trust has agreed not to continue with its existing plans while these other options are pursued."

Strikes, or the threat of strikes, have forced bosses to back down from similar plans in a number of trusts.

●Tweet @GMBSouthern and @unite_southeast with support

■CLEANERS, caterers and porters at St Mary's Hospital in west London are set to walk out in their third wave of strikes next week.

The members of the United Voices of the World union, outsourced to Sodexo, are demanding equality with NHS workers. A four-day strike is set to begin next Monday.

●Join the pickets from 7am in Praed Street, W2 1NY. Donations to uvwunion.org.uk/strikefund

SIXTH FORM COLLEGES

Walkouts grow at colleges

>>>from back page
"Students need a better deal. There are many cases where you know that if students had a bit of extra help it would make all the difference."

Striker Ben added, "Our college does amazing things for people. We have students who can barely speak any English and within a year they are passing English Language GCSEs."

"But everything we're doing is just being stifled."

Trevor described how bigger class sizes mean more stress for workers, and a worse education for students. "We don't have time to plan properly," he told Socialist Worker.

"And we've lost our support staff. Students with special educational needs are suffering disproportionately."

The stress, and the fact that workers can earn more elsewhere, is driving many out of sixth form colleges altogether. But strikers are also optimistic that their action can get results.

"We can absolutely win something from this," said Rob. "We're out here to win."

The union should name more dates for strikes to keep the pressure on the government—whoever is in office after 12 December.

As Jean said, "Members have had enough after nine and a half years of austerity. We've campaigned and we've lobbied, but the government hasn't listened."

"Now we're striking. People are angry, but they're also pleased that the union is backing this fight with strikes."

TRANSPORT

Renfrewshire bus fightback

WORKERS AT McGill's bus firm in Renfrewshire are set to start a wave of strikes next week after voting overwhelmingly for action.

Around 50 workers plan to walk out on 26 November, followed by strikes on 2 and 9 December. Inchinnan and Johnstone depots could be hit.

The Unite union members are fighting for pay parity between workers who were transferred over on a contract from Arriva and those who have long-standing contracts with McGill's.

Ex-Arriva staff are paid

8-14 percent less than others. Those workers complain they have been subjected to pay freezes for eight years while those on pre-existing McGill's contracts have had several pay increases.

■A BALLOT for strikes at Yellow Buses, a firm based in Bournemouth, was called off this week after bosses backed off from attacks.

Workers were set to take action over an "unjustified attack" on their union rep. But Martin Conder's appeal saw all charges dropped.

TUBE WORKERS

Action on the Victoria Line

THE VICTORIA line on the London Tube is set to grind to a halt for several days next week as workers strike.

Drivers on the line voted unanimously for strikes over pay this summer, and have vowed to walk out after talks failed.

Workers are set to walk out for 24 hours from 10pm next Wednesday, with delays expected until Friday.

Their RMT union says bosses have reneged on

commitments made in negotiations around pay, abuses of procedures and staff harassment.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said transport bosses were "mugging off drivers on the Victoria line by making promises inside Acas and then pulling them away the moment that they step out in the daylight."

"RMT representatives will not be treated with contempt," he said.

GUARDS



Workers picketing in Coventry

PICTURE: DAN ALLEN

West Mids defends guards

A 24-HOUR strike hit West Midlands Trains last Saturday as workers took action to keep a guard on the train.

RMT union members walked out to "defend the safety of the travelling public" over threats to remove a second safety-trained member

of staff from services. Workers are fighting for a guarantee that all West Midlands Trains will continue to run with a guard, which ensures safe and accessible travel for all.

They are planning to walk out every Saturday until the end of the year.

RAIL ROUND UP

■RMT UNION members were set to protest outside City Hall at 9am on Wednesday this week.

They are angry at London Overground's plans to slash ticket office opening hours.

Workers are also balloting for action over the cuts.

■A SCHEDULED strike by train managers in the RMT union on the Virgin West Coast line was called off this week. Agreement was reached about the treatment of a sacked worker following talks at conciliation service Acas.

■CATERERS ON the Eurostar have announced a 24-hour strike on 29 November. The caterers are the last group of workers on Eurostar who are paid below the £10.55 hourly rate.

Their employer, Rail Gourmet, is part of catering giant SSP.

■RMT MEMBERS are preparing for action on the Tyne and Wear Metro over pay and staffing issues.

Workers voted 80 percent for action on a 100 percent turnout. But bosses offered no concessions.

LINCOLNSHIRE

Lincs health visitors launch month-long strike

HEALTH VISITORS in Lincolnshire began a month-long walkout over pay and terms and conditions on Monday.

It marks a serious escalation by the 76 Unite union members at Tory-run Lincolnshire County Council.

Around 50 workers, who were transferred from the NHS to the local authority in 2017, have staged 32 days of strikes since June.

They have not received a pay rise since the transfer—despite pay deals in both the NHS and local government.

Other health visitors at the council have now joined the dispute to demand all

workers are put on the higher pay band 10.

Unite regional officer Steve Syson said, "The decision to hold a month-long strike demonstrates the deepening crisis in the county's health visitor service."

"It shows the adverse impact this is having on families and children."

"Already the council is hemorrhaging health visitors."

Trade unionists should hold solidarity collections in their workplaces and branches for the strikers.

●Tweet solidarity to @UniteEastMids

STRIKES TO HIT 60 UNIVERSITIES

by SADIE ROBINSON

SIXTY universities across Britain will be hit with an eight-day strike from Monday of next week.

The UCU union said the walkouts will involve around 43,000 workers. The action can transform higher education.

It follows big votes for strikes over two disputes. One is over pay, workload, pay gaps and casualised contracts. The other is over attacks on the USS pension scheme.

Activists report that workers are up for the fight.

Julie Hearn is president of the UCU at Lancaster university. “We had a strike committee meeting and a general meeting of around 70 people last week,” she told Socialist Worker. “That’s around double the normal size.

Big meetings took place at several other universities last week including Bournemouth, Goldsmiths in London, Newcastle, Birmingham, Ulster and University College London.

SIXTH FORM

NEU college walkouts grow as more workers ballot to join the picket lines

WORKERS AT 34 sixth form colleges across England were set to strike on Wednesday—the third walkout in a fight over pay and funding.

NEU union members previously struck on 5 November and 17 October. The walkouts involved 23 sixth form colleges, and then 25. Now the number of colleges taking action is even bigger after reballots saw nine more pass the Tories’ 50 percent turnout threshold for legal strikes.

Jean Evanson is the post-16 national executive member for the union and works at Shrewsbury College Group. She told



STRIKERS MARCHED through London to build support for their strike in 2018

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Carlo Morelli is a UCU rep at Dundee university and sits on the union’s national executive committee.

“The union meetings that are taking place are all big,” he told Socialist Worker. “In several places, a whole load

of new, casualised staff are coming along.

“We had an organising meeting in Scotland last week with reps from every branch except one. I was really surprised.

“People had had their

strike committee meetings, got picket line rotas organised, planned their social media strategies. All reported having big branch meetings.”

At 43 universities, union members will strike over both disputes. Those at a further

three will walk out over pensions, while workers at 14 more will strike over pay and conditions.

Workers are furious at years of real-terms pay cuts and pay discrimination against women, black

workers and disabled staff. They also want to turn back the tide of casualised, insecure contracts that is sweeping the sector.

Doris Merkl-Davies is vice president of the UCU at Bangor university in Wales. “A lot of members, including those on permanent, full time contracts, are feeling the squeeze of declining salaries and increasing living costs,” she said.

“But they are prepared to fight by going on strike.”

More than half of all staff at universities across Britain are now on casualised contracts. At Bangor university that figure rises to over 65 percent.

Dyfrig Jones, president of the UCU branch there, said workers are aware of the “inconvenience” the action will cause students. But he said, “The issues at stake are too important for us to sit back and do nothing.”

“This is about so much more than just our pensions. We are fighting for the very future of higher education.”

University workers mount a fight for the future of education—turn to page 17



Striking for education in Newham

Socialist Worker that the last strike was “a great show of solidarity across the country”.

Strikers at many sixth form colleges picketed in the morning, and then went into town and city centres to leaflet the public.

“We had many positive conversations with students, parents, grandparents and concerned members of the public,” said Jean.

“They understand that our public sector has been savaged. The cuts in sixth form colleges have hit teachers and support staff too. Improvements

to our pay and conditions will improve the learning conditions for our students.”

Rob is an NEU rep at Newham Sixth Form College in east London. “Students seem supportive of our strikes,” he told Socialist Worker. “They understand that what we’re doing is for the future of education.”

Strikers have suffered real terms pay cuts of 16 percent since 2010—and have now been offered a lower pay rise than school teachers. And the Tories have slashed £1.1 billion from 16-19 education funding.

The impact has been felt most in poorer areas—and workers are furious about the impact on students.

Support staff and tutors have been cut, broken equipment isn’t replaced and students are crammed into ever bigger classes.

Jean said, “People are despairing about the impact of cuts. It’s particularly worrying for students who have mental health problems. Bigger class sizes and increasing workload mean we can’t give students the support they need.”

Newham union member Fran told Socialist Worker, >>>continued on page xx